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Imaging the Male Body: Ads, Aesthetics and Representations of Imagined Masculinities

By

Amber Marie Williams ©

A thesis to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Department of Sociology

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Abstract

This work explores the relationship between the imagined boundaries and make-up of masculinit(ies), and representations of the male body found within advertising culture. Images and text within ads are unpackaged in order to understand how masculinity gets etched onto the canvas of the male body. An analysis and discussion of different (and competing) masculinities illustrates how Masculinity is a myth. Certain bodily codes and signs are talked about in relation to each other, in order to show how masculinity is not the same in all contexts: 'being a man' is not a simple or easy undertaking. Indeed, 'being a man' is the product of numerous intertextual and complex efforts. Throughout all of this, the male body becomes visible. The male body, through imaged and textual representation becomes knowable. Within this work we see that the male body is a central part of 'being a man'. This goes against popular (reductionist) sentiments which claim that males in Western culture are beyond or above their bodies, and that men are not concerned with their own aesthetics. Males and male bodies are represented as aesthetic subjects and objects within certain pockets of advertising culture. This work enables us to better see and understand the gendered and sexed appearances that become built onto and into different bodies. As well, it helps us to understand how gendered bodies, and bodies themselves, come to mean different things in different contexts. Gender, and bodies, are dynamic and fluid.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my Dad. He helped me to appreciate my own body, and bodies of others. As well, I dedicate this to all of the 'men' in my life. May it help to open doors and minds.

Preface: Explanatory Section

55 ads are referenced within the body of this work. Permission to reproduce the ads in their entirety was not secured. Therefore, the actual ads are not included within this thesis. Instead, I have provided the reader with a brief textual description of each of the ads. These descriptions are slotted into the body of the thesis.

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Part 1: Introduction to the Project

a) Personal Stage Setting Preface

The idea for this project was borne from a question I kept asking myself in regard to men and women, beauty and appearances. It had been brewing in my head for a long while, and was somewhat crystallized when I started dating a young male who was obsessed with his looks. Although I was initially interested in him because of his looks, I soon became aware that his obsession was going to be the reason for my disinterest. A great deal of our (short) time together was spent talking about ways in which he could make himself more attractive. His methods included an acute attention to his clothing, an intense concern for his hair, and an obsessive compulsion against his body being 'fat'. He never ate anything which he did not know he could 'burn off' in the gym the next day. I spent time listening to him speak about his new techniques for building his body in the gym. After a while, I had to ask myself, "Is this what a male is *supposed* to be concerned about, and why does this concern me so much?" Why was I experiencing such cognitive dissonance?

After the relationship ended I continued to notice anomalies. What I considered to be 'abnormal' male behavior seemed to be everywhere. Males were acting in ways which did not seem to fit into what a I thought a 'man' was supposed to be doing. For example, I noticed some odd male behavior in the university gym. Given that gym culture seems to thrive on being 'meet/meat markets', and, operating under the presumption of compulsory heterosexuality, I noticed that men were ogling other men rather than other females in the gym. The males were staring at each other lift weights (I'm assuming to find better techniques, or perhaps I was witnessing a male 'body' envy. Or, perhaps these men were being 'good feminists' in staring at other males and not at female bodies. Perhaps this somehow relieved their consciences.) For whatever reason, the point is that men were staring at each other. The actual looking was often quick and covert, skipping from male to male. Although the looks were never long and enduring, they were there.

As well, I began to notice that some of my male friends paid attention to their own looks and aesthetics in ways which I had not previously noticed. They would 'get ready' to go out for a night on the town, much like a stereotypical 'female' would. (Although a female who spends time and attention to her looks may be treated to certain negative assumptions and stereotypes, a male who does such things, I believe, gets treated more harshly than would a female.) This did not make sense given that men are supposedly so uninterested in their own aesthetics.

I remember going shopping with a seemingly 'macho' (he likes women and likes to talk about women and other 'man things' such as beer), athletic (he enjoys to watch and plays sports), 'normal' (looks like the average run of the mill 'guy') male friend, who ended up not buying a pair of pants because they made his "ass look funny". In these ways, the differences between the males and females I know are not that marked and distinct, at least, not as marked or as different as they *should be* according to traditional assumptions about men, masculinity and aesthetics.

When I began telling people about this project and what I was trying to accomplish (a highlighting of the male body by taking a closer look at bodily masculinities), the women I told would offer up private and personal stories to me about their male mates. Most stated that the project was much needed, and offered up examples about how their male mates would constantly be asking them if they were "getting fat", or if their bums "looked 'OK' in a pair of pants". The males who I told, for the most part, gave me similar reactions. They would offer up stories of what they did in order to maintain and enhance their own appearances. I was told of personal habits such as chest waxing, hair coloring, manicures, and the use of tanning beds. I started to see a hidden pattern of male attention to aesthetics and indeed, beauty, which is not altogether apparent and manifest within our culture. Looks seemed to 'matter' to men according to the people I talked to.

I knew it would be difficult to build a project such as this on hearsay and opinions such as the ones I have offered above. I had been reading certain men's magazines on and off for a couple of years (they give much better information, and have much funnier articles that most female oriented magazines do), and started to notice that what I had been thinking about in terms of the male body and beauty was crystallized within the ads and, to some extent, the articles of these men's magazines. I decided to take a closer look at some of the ads within current magazines, in order to try to unpack what is going on within imaged and textual representations of the male body.

To be honest, most of my questions remain unanswered to some extent. Most of the ads offer up ambiguous, conflicting, and contradictory representations of manliness. However, this is what makes this project important. How males are represented as 'men' is not straightforward and definitely not the same across space and place, which is important to recognize. In turn, this is probably why I felt such cognitive dissonance in my dating relationship.

According to normative (imagined) masculinity, real Men are supposed to be strong. They are supposed to take charge. They are not supposed to concern themselves with notions of their own beauty, their own appearances and aesthetics. 'Taking it like a man' means taking it straight, being tough, being macho. The question then becomes what are we to make of representations of men who do not 'take it like a man'? Does this mean they are somehow 'less of a man'? I would say yes - yet a qualified yes. Certain representations suggest that men are being pictured as less than Men in a traditional hegemonic sense of masculinity. Accordingly, the categories (and expectations) of what a 'man is' are expanding. However, competing masculinities within ad culture do not always mesh. They do not always as to be one type of male is to not be another type. Masculinity is not one and the same across all representations of masculinity. Men can be men without 'taking it' so to speak.

In short, we need to question what we think we know about gendered bodies. After all, most people reject or at least dismiss gender and sexed stereotypes *as* outdated, romanticized *stereotypes.* As well, most people are not completely wrapped up in being a male or being a female. Most people do not devote much of their time to being a Man or a Woman. But it is also important to recognize that there are residues left over from the stereotypical discourse which informs us about being male and female. Although males may not physically strive to 'take it like a man' or build muscles, etc, we know that these things are a part of what is incorporated into 'Man'. Whether we act on this gendered cultural information will not be the focus of this project. Instead, the focus will be the cultural information in regard to imagined gender expectations: what do we think we know about what a real man is? By what is this notion informed? In turn, how do we incorporate that into what we 'know' about being a man or a woman? The main question I am operating with is how imagined (tacit) conceptions of masculinity contrast or compare with imaged representations of masculinit(ies). And, in turn, how are these imagined masculinities constructed upon and within representations of the Male body?

b) A Brief Note on the Researcher and Representation

Some say that in order to write well, we must write what we know. However, I am a female writing about male bodies through a female vantage point and female body. Some may argue that this is a disadvantage to the work, that I should not write what I cannot know. However, I must mention that this may only be problematic to a certain degree. How I conceive of the images and text as a female may be cause for concern in that a male may not read the images the same way as I have. However, if I was a male writing on this topic I do not think I would feel more comfortable, nor would I be more privileged to greater or more important insights about male bodies. I would still be only one male, who cannot possibly represent or speak for all males, or speak to how 'all male' bodies and subjectivities are represented and experienced. Finally, I am not exactly talking about experience per se within this work, but rather, the *representations* of male experiences and male bodies.

As I have been talking about and using the word *representation*, this concept needs to be explained. "Barthes defines representation as a case in which something remains totally inside" (Gallop, 1988:151). In this way, only the representation (and not the 'real thing') 'comes out' to the looker. In terms of ads, the issue of masculinity being charted on the male body is important because it serves as a base from which to look at representations of masculinities and maleness. Thomas (1996) notes that

> [i]t is this inescapable alterity of the visual...that makes the project of masculine self-representation an always uneasy process of fluidic self-alteration that calls the solidified boundaries of masculinity itself into question: that is, masculinity does not exist outside representation, yet in the processes of self-representation it risks losing itself, changing itself, seeping out its own fissures and cracks (p. 16).

Both bodies and masculinities are always subject to change, to alteration, to seepage and negotiation as they do not exist outside of representation. Although masculine boundaries may be fluid and difficult to pin down, they are visible (imaged) through representations of the male body and within text *about* the male body.

What this project deals with is *representations* of masculinities and male bodies, and not masculine male bodies themselves. The representation of the male body takes the place of the material male body; in effect, the representation is seen as real. But representations cannot be real. As such, representations will always be lacking; lacking the materiality, the 'realness' which all representations are missing by their very definition. They can only represent, and *are not*, the thing they represent. Representation then assumes (in some form) the thing it is representing.

Representations make us vulnerable because it is a representation of, but not, *the* 'real thing'. In turn, we cannot say that the thing represented in the image is 'real'. In reference to the above Thomas quote (1996), "masculinity does not exist outside representation" (pg. 16). For example, if the image is representing a certain male, the male featured in the image is not real in any 'real' everyday male way. He, too, is a representation. In effect, we have representations of representations. This makes the 'subject' subject to a certain degree of passivity when read through the image or text. The passive looker

> is vulnerable to disturbing events in the form of photographic images in a way that one is not to the real thing. That vulnerability is part of the distinctive passivity of someone who is a spectator twice over, a spectator of events already shaped, first by the participants and second by the image maker (Gallop 1988: 152).

Messages of the image and text then come to the viewer from this fragmented, passive, second order space (representations of representations).

This slight, but important, difference between male experiences and male representations of being may enable my female location to be less problematic than it may have been if I were attempting a more male experience based project. Unfortunately, as this study must be limited to certain objectives, the experiences (as well as subjectivities and identities) of the male subject who sees these images within advertising culture cannot be addressed at this time. This study focuses on images and representations of males bodies found within a specific segment advertising culture (fashion magazines). Future research should, however, attempt to get at how men feel and react to such images. It should be said that I do not think that these images serve to inform males in an absolute manner (e.g., this is male, and you as a male must do this, buy this). People look at images and negotiate how they fit them into their own lives. It is not a matter of 'monkey see, monkey do'.

My position as a researcher will affect the research, no matter if I am male, female, or somewhere else in/on the gender/sex plane. The analyses and concepts I pull are from a specific location: my own white (English, French, German and Ukrainian), female, young (25), Western Canadian (Alberta), urban (Edmonton, Calgary), middle class, educated (MA degree), employed social position. As Said notes, there is no position from which one can stand outside of their own located cultural positioning. There is no such thing as an Archimedean vantage point (1989: 211). My specific social position should be brought to the fore. It becomes less of an issue, less problematic, however, when we consider that all researchers, all scientists, all *people* are viewing the world from these located subject positions.

c) Introduction and Methodology

This project attempts to make the male body more visible in ways which are not immediately available to us as cultural readers and consumers. Little research exists on this topic (Kimmel 1987: 122; Nettleton and Watson 1998: 2). Because there is little literature to draw from, an unpacking of numerous fashion advertisements will help to map out male bodily aesthetic discourse: how the male body is talked about and represented, and the messages about masculinity and 'how to be a man' which follow from and emerge out of these representations.

The reader needs to know the working definitions of the words and terms I use throughout this work. 'Real man' or 'real men' is meant to encompass what is tacit within Western culture about traditionally being characterized as a 'man'. This includes being the provider, being tough, strong, non-emotive, assertive, aggressive, dominant, heterosexual, non-aesthetically invested, white, and middle class. Cultural notions such as 'taking it like a man' or being 'a man or a mouse' fit in here as well. We seem to tacitly *know* what these phrases mean. Within this thesis, this type of 'take it like a man' masculinity is shown as 'Masculinity' instead of 'masculinity'. The capital 'M' signifies the way, or a true way, to be macho, hard, rough, tumble, everything involved in 'taking it' like a man. Even having said this, capital 'M' masculinity can mean different things in different contexts. 'M'asculinity does not enjoy a complete and singular definition. Being a masculine real man may mean being a hero, being a gentleman, being aggressive. Capital 'M' masculinity is not straightforward.

This project will also illuminate other small m masculinities: masculinities which are somewhat contrary to being a Man. Often these masculinities take on softer more feminine qualities. However, these softer masculinities are still performed and located on male bodies. We know that small 'm' masculine men are indeed males, even though they may not be 'M'asculine or macho. In the following citation Justad (1996) explains different strategies used within men's studies to get at this capital ‘M’/lower case ‘m’ masculine variation.

> One response to this challenge is to argue or assume that our experience of being men contains a-some-thing that cuts across race, class, and sexual orientation. This allows for the argument that there exists a kind of cultural capital "M" Masculinity in which all boys and men participate (Note 1). A second strategy argues that the politics of gender and difference would be better served by addressing small "m" masculin*ities* in our reconstructive efforts (Brod and Kaufman, 1994). A third men's studies strategy eliminated the word masculinity entirely from our talk of how men can move beyond patriarchy. This approach wants to leave masculinity behind (Mirsky, 1993), refuse to be a "man" (Stolenberg, 1989), and instead talk of revisioning men's lives (Kuper, 1993) while finding new ways of being male (Note 2) (p. 256, emphasis in original).

These strategies allow us to conceive of masculinity not only as a seemingly semi-solid thing (Masculinity), but also in alternate ways, as alternate masculinities.

It is impossible to talk about the project of masculinity without referencing the words (signifiers for) male. Within this thesis, words such as 'macho' and 'manly' are used interchangeably with being a 'real man' and Masculinity. Even using the words for the male human (male, man, and men) are loaded with these culturally tacit masculine assumptions. These words have been Masculinized. Being a man then stands in opposition to being a 'girly man', a wimp, a sissy, a woman, and a female. The assumptions are *built into* the words. Images and texts exemplifying these assumptions will be used to help *break down* how these things, these 'male' signifieds, have come to be so intertwined with the words themselves (signifiers). I am trying to displace how neatly the words men, man, and masculine line up with being *Male*.

Of particular importance within this thesis is that representations of manliness specifically reference white manliness and white masculinity. Although 'race' intersects and intertwines with all types of masculinity, the focus within this paper relies almost solely on notions of 'white boy' masculinity. Other ethnicities (which call for different projections and placements of manliness) and other skin colors, and all that is attached to skin color and race (so to speak) are not addressed explicitly. This thesis and my analysis are then limited by this exclusion.

Latent content analysis will be used in order to better understand how certain masculinities and male bodily codes have been constructed and narrated according to very specific dominant male fictions. Latent content analysis, as with any research method, carries methodological problems with its use. Therefore, it is important to highlight some of these problems in terms of the research at hand. Latent content can be roughly defined as being the "*deep structural* meaning conveyed by the message" (Berg 1995: 176, emphasis in original). It is different than a more manifest analysis of content in that latent content cannot be counted in any certain terms. Some argue that analysis of latent meanings is permitted however "require[s] corroboration by independent evidence" (Holsti 1969: 598, as quoted in Berg 1995: 176). In turn, a focus on the male body as imaged and talked about within the text of ads serves as a base or 'basic body' of 'evidence' from which to observe the ongoing masculinization of the male subject *through* the male body.

Furthermore, Berg (1995) notes that "although there are some dangers in directly inferring from latent symbolism, it is nonetheless possible to use it... in examining propaganda" (p. 176). One could say that representations of 'being a man' within ad culture is a form of imaged (and imagined) visual and textual propaganda. One learns how to be a man (and how not to be a man) via rhetoric and propaganda through ads. I will unpack and identify certain ways in which male bodies and 'masculinities' exist and thrive within both intertextual frames of ad 'propaganda', as well as our everyday lives and subjectivities.

Although latent content analysis is one method used within this project, this project can also be characterized as a phenomenological undertaking. The themes I pulled from the ads came out of my own interaction with both the text and images in the ads. It is more holistic than just 'latent content analysis'. This project has changed me, and the project itself has changed with me. A constant interaction with both the images and texts within the ads, as well as constant bombardment of other popular cultural messages enabled me to massage my own understanding of what I was seeing and reading within the images. As a small example, while I was writing this project, I watched the recent movies Fight Club and The Full Monty, and talked with numerous people about the meat of the project. The project was always in the back of my mind, always being shaped and molded according to what I saw, touched, and felt within my own experiences. Hence, this project is an exploration of my own experiences. In turn, my own experiences are also located in the social. To an extent, they are not my own. This also contributed to the project as phenomenological in that my senses are mediated by my social and cultural temporal location.

Within this thesis, 55 ads will be presented to the reader. These are accompanied by my analysis, unpackaging, and commentary on the masculinized and hegemonic codes and signs and texts within each ad. Both images and text will be discussed. Messages about masculinities, the male body, male subjectivities, and male aesthetic investment emerge and are discussed. As this is a phenomenological undertaking, the 'emergence' of these messages are all mediated by my own investment in terms of what I am able to see and what I take to be important. Hence, what emerged was dependent on how I read the ads.

Why ads? Ads serve as a visual stage for the construction of masculinity through representations of the male body. The following quote about females and femininity also speaks to male representational issues and visible masculinity:

> With the advent of movies and television, the rules for femininity have come to be culturally transmitted more and more through the deployment of standard visual images. As a result, femininity itself has come to be largely a matter of constructing, in the manner described by Erving Goffman, the appropriate surface presentation of the self. We no longer are told what "a lady" is or of what femininity consists. Rather, we learn the rules directly through bodily discourse:

> through images which tell us the clothes, body shape, facial expression, movements, and behavior is required (Jaggar and Bordo 1989: 17).

Ads instruct and inform women on being feminine subjects and objects, and men on being masculine subjects and objects. Images and texts instruct men on how to 'be' a 'man'. In turn, women are instructed or informed about how men should be. (This goes back to my romantic story at the beginning, wherein I thought a 'real man' should not be invested in his own aesthetics.) Advertisements were chosen to be analyzed as they provide a fairly succinct, material, two-dimensional (and therefore easily collected) base for exploring visible masculinity and male bodies.

Ads were collected and taken from a variety of magazines, internet websites and newspapers. The complete list of sources I looked at includes: Icon, Maxim, GQ (Gentleman's Quarterly), Fashion, Flare, Mademoiselle, Vogue, Shift, Gear, Details, Teen People, Men's Health, US, McLean's Magazine, FMH, W, The Face, Vogue, Detour, The Globe and Mail, The Edmonton Journal, The Calgary Herald, Marie Claire, Vanity Fair, Elle, Cosmopolitan, Stuff, Jane, Images, Sports Illustrated, and Bazaar. The specific sources where the ads are drawn from are referenced in the body of the thesis as well as the bibliography of this work. The dates of these magazines ranged from June of 1996 to October 1999. Most of the images used within this thesis are from magazines published in late 1998 and 1999.

Representations of 'how to be a man' vary accordingly with the target audiences of the different magazines. For the most part, fashion magazines were used as the primary source of the ads. As a result, the sample of ads which are discussed within this thesis is limited by the particular magazines examined. Fashion magazines provided the best arena from which to draw ads about male bodies, as the male body is used as a canvas in order to sell fashion related products. Male bodies are still quite hidden within advertising culture not devoted to fashion. Magazines devoted to other groups of people (such as business, computer, biking, skateboarding) are not directly oriented around bodies, and therefore did not provide a strong base from which I could collect images. This is a limitation of this project, in that the sample from which the ads were drawn relies mostly on fashion magazines.

As well, different types of magazines portray male bodies differently than others. Magazines directed at female audiences (e.g., Vogue, Cosmopolitan, Elle, Flare) had different ads than did magazines directed at male audiences (e.g., GQ, Maxim, Gear). As well, North American magazines (e.g., Maxim, GQ) had different imaged and textual content than did ones from the UK (e.g., The Face, FHM). This thesis is limited in that little consideration is given to the differences between the ads found within each type of magazine. This is important as differences between the magazines could be contributing to different imaging and discourse. Representations of the male body and masculinity may differ by magazine type.

Indeed, certain products also lend themselves to the (re)production of very different types of masculinity. Products such as cologne, skin care, and other less traditionally masculine products serve to promote a different type of masculinity than ads for products such as cars, technology, or cigarettes. Products then become not only gendered according to male or female (e.g., perfume vs. cologne, beauty products vs. skin care products), but also become gendered in terms of different ways or degrees of real Men. Ads for a variety of products were considered and collected. These products include clothes, fragrances, cameras, discmen, hair products, hair restoration drugs, hard liquor, sunglasses, milk, skin care products, pore cleansing strips, cigarettes, underwear, video games, phones, cars, and breath mints. Depending on the product being sold, the representations of masculinity differ: there are different signs and symbols of what a man is/looks like. Some of the symbols which will be used to decipher masculinized messages and codes of the male body include muscles, tans, clothing, lack of clothing, beauty products, language used, facial expressions, products themselves, facial hair, body hair, jewelry, tattoos, body language, body placement, and color used in the image, to name a few.

I chose the ads because of their visual and textual representations of masculinities, and of the male body. Sometimes masculinity was directly confronted within the image, sometimes it was more subtle (e.g., ads which picture women show contrasts between masculinity and femininity). Any and all images deemed relevant were collected for the sample. Because of this, I did not adhere to any methodological criteria for achieving a 'representative' sample. One feature all the ads hold in common is that they all represent some sort of masculinity (either visually imaged or textually represented) somewhere within each ad. Sometimes ads which imaged females are used within the analysis. This is done in order to show how males are often imaged against what they are not supposed to be (e.g., being female or feminine). The females in the images serve as a visual contrast for ‘male’. I chose images of men who were clothed, men who were not, men who were doing things, and men who were stationary.

Often, the exact same ad would appear over and over again in different magazines. In total, I looked at over 100 different ads for the purposes of this project. This in itself is a comment of the visibility of masculinity. Given the number of specific magazine titles I looked at (approximately 30), and that more than one issue was looked at for a number of the magazines (approximately 40 magazine issues), 100 ads which represent males is a low number. This speaks to two issues. The first is that since many of the ads were repeated over different issues of the same magazine, as well as across different magazines types, this shows how messages work by repetition and seriality (to be talked about further later on). The second is that even within fashion magazines which must use the male body as a canvas for commodity projections, the male body is still not highly visible within ads. Representations of the male body in ads enables the male body to become visible in a venue, but the visibility of the male body is still limited to *certain* venues and are relatively few in number. The number of ads used is small because the male body still enjoys this privileged invisibility, even within fashion magazines which have an interest in making a spectacle of the male body.

The final consideration of which ads were to be analyzed was dependent on how well they represented or indicated what I felt was important to study and/or make mention of. This may seem problematic, as Holsti notes, "[t]he inclusion or exclusion of content is done according to consistently applied criteria of selection; this requirement eliminates analysis in which only material supporting the investigator's hypothesis are examined" (Holsti 1968: 598 as quoted in Berg 1995: 175). How then did I choose the themes and trends to make mention of, and does it 'matter' that I chose ads which exemplified what *I* deemed to be important messages about masculinity? Did I just choose the ads which I deemed to be important? To answer this question I need to inform the reader about how I came to see the themes to be discussed.

All of the ads were physically placed together in a massive ad pastiche. I then looked at the ads in conjunction and in comparison with each other. I tried to think about the big picture, keeping in mind all of the images in relation to each other. I realize that the themes which I have pulled out of this image pastiche may not have been what someone else may have seen or found. However, all of the themes and trends which will be explored within this project were ones which continued to come out of the ads time and time again. After a while, the repetition of certain masculine messages and narratives made them difficult to ignore. Because I was looking for 'big picture' themes about masculinities, it made sense to keep the criteria of ad selection rather simple: whether or not a male was pictured or textually represented within the ad. As well, due to the exploratory nature of this topic area, I did not want to exclude possible themes and narratives prematurely by limiting my image base.

Some argue "[g]eneralizations that researchers make on the basis of content analysis are limited to the cultural communication itself" (Neuman 1994: 263). Therefore, the analysis and themes found within this project may not be 'applicable' in any other time, space, or place. My take on the ads is then limited and bound by the very method *of* analysis. Hence, the trends and themes which will be discussed in this paper are limited by these constraints in terms of representation and generalizability. However, this *exploratory* research could be used as a base for others in order to formulate less idiosyncratic, and perhaps more quantitative findings on the subject (especially in terms of the connections between different magazines and the representations of different masculinities). In some ways this exploratory project will inevitably be an exercise in the idiosyncratic, in that the trends and themes I discuss and outline throughout the thesis will not be used to formulate a grand narrative about the meanings of 'Manhood'. The 'conclusions' found throughout this project are therefore not generalizable in the sense that they cannot be applied in a fixed way to all males. In fact, any conclusions found can only be generalized to the ads used within this project.

My goal for this research is not to come up with definitive answers or conclusions about *The* representation of *The* male body. Instead, I am hoping to melt or destabilize the base for pre-existing stereotypes which are presented to us as real or 'fact'. Notions of ‘masculinity’ or ‘male’ seem to be privileged as something total and real, when they should not be so privileged. 'Masculinity' and 'male' are neither total, nor real. As it stands now, parts of the male body seem to represent that which *is* man, and this is not the case. An appearance cannot be dismantled from it's total (Man) into its parts (here body parts). "Such semiological systems do indeed exist and are continually being used in the making and reading of images. Nevertheless the sum total of these systems cannot exhaust, does not begin to cover, all that can be read in appearances" (Berger & Mohr 1982: 112).

There is, therefore, more to appearances then the sum of their parts and, by trying to unpack or read an image or text into parts, we cannot claim to have then captured all that the image or appearance 'is' as a 'totality'. Day (1990) further extrapolates on this idea, in that the appearance of one's body somehow serves as or becomes, a sum of its parts. This is especially true in relation to the intrusion of ad culture (photos, cameras, TVs):

> This general emphasis on the body has to be seen in conjunction with a technology which makes everything visible; the microscope and the camera *combine to make the world the sum of its appearance*. ... With the 'loss' of the inner life comes a realignment of subjectivity which is now centered on the body. Subjectivity becomes visible in such sayings as 'you are what you eat' or 'you are what you wear' (p. 49 emphasis added).

In turn, my hope for this project is not to deny or to devalue masculine identity, but to question the solidity which we take from parts of the masculine identity and body. In short, "[d]econstruction does not deny meaning; it resists meaning" (Weed 1989: xix). The point of this research is then to position the reader from a location which allows resistance to that which was not previously in need of resistance. Therefore, something (an image, text, ad, muscle, moustache, lipstick, etc.) which seems at first to make perfect and immediate cultural sense upon closer scrutiny seems disjointed, patchworked, invested, and performed. By carefully taking apart common images, texts and messages about male bodies and masculinities, we will see how certain imaged and textual rhetorical propaganda work together to form something called 'male'. This is done through masculinized signs and gendered markers. These signs and markers create a necessary illusion of a solid and stable set of male bodies and identities. However, the illusion of solidity and stability can be shattered, thereby showing its illusionary and hallucinatory base.

My goal is similar to one which Thomas (1996) notes, in that his "critical and political interest, therefore, is to make hegemonic masculinity visible" (p. 17). It is only upon careful scrutiny and unpacking that a seemingly stable myth as pervasive as 'male' or 'Masculine' can be messed up. Once this is accomplished, masculinity as a system of ordering no longer makes sense in immediate ways. The male body or the male identity no longer exists. Marx, in his Communist Manifesto argued that "[a]ll that is solid melts into air, ..." (Marx, as quoted in Berman, 1978:21, as cited in Tucker, 1978: 476, emphasis added). In short, I want to enable the meltdown of male bodies, rendering them less solid, less rigid and less set in stone. The illusion of a hegemonic, singular, Male or Masculine then melts into air.

Part 2: Why should we take a closer look at Invisible Men - Rationale

a) 'Seeing' Male Bodies in Media Representations

Visible male bodies allow us to 'look' (both literally and figuratively) at how these masculine myths and narratives remain present (although changing) within a popular consciousness. Flannigan-Saint-Aubin recognizes a

> complex masculinity for which there is only symbolic as opposed to direct knowledge: Trapped within patriarchal logos, masculinity ultimately may be unknowable, but *it can be broached or inferred from the symbolic secret code of the male body* (Brod and Kaufman 1994: 242, emphasis added).

The 'symbolic secret code of the male body' becomes less ephemeral as male bodies become more visible.

Berger (1973) notes that "men act and women appear" (p. 47). Relatedly, Justad (1996) says that "[m]en *have* bodies while women *are* their bodies; women have intellects while men are their intellects" (p. 362, emphasis in original). These sorts of reductionist sentiments do not permit or promote the visual display of male bodies. Because of sentiments such as these, male bodies (and masculinities) have been treated as invisible. This invisibility is characteristic by privilege, in that male subjectivities or male bodies are considered to be *above* their bodies on certain important levels. Their bodies are invisible because of a presumption that they *do not need to be* visible. Male bodies are in some ways not central to 'being a man'. In this way, the current trend towards the visibility of the male body is a *loss of privilege*, in that males bodies are no longer detached from male subjectivities. Males, much like females in the past, are allowed (and required) to 'become their bodies' in certain venues. For the most part, traditionally 'male' roles allow for a separation from a male subjectivity and a gendered/sexed body and identity. Justad (1996) notes that

> [a] men's studies (re)turn to the body, to male bodies, is neither an argument for a return to an essential masculinity nor as effort to create a post-partriarchical "man" ex nihilo, as it were. This (re)turn to our bodies assumes that by opening a

> space for an embodied masculinity men will become marked as "gendered" individuals and move toward acceptance of a broader range of human experience. ... As men begin to explore ways in which being masculine is not exclusive of the "other" that has been the body, we may be able to avoid the *pull of easy gender oppositions* and seek out new and genuine articulations of body difference (p. 361, emphasis added).

In this sense an understanding or exploration into the meanings and boundaries of masculinities via the visibility of the masculinized male body may prove fruitful in relation to revealing the simplistic and reductionist logistic of 'the pull of easy gender oppositions'. Male and female seem much less opposite. An exploration of the male body can be used to show that contrasting something called 'male' with something called 'female' is not as easy as charting them out on a continuum of gender 'opposition'. As Kimmel (1987) notes

> [t]he sex-role paradigm points two fixed, static, and mutually exclusive role containers with no interpenetration. Further, bipolar mutual exclusivity of sex-roles reinforces oppositional assumptions about masculinity and femininity; although defined in reference to abstract ideals, sex-roles reinforce the popular notions of the "otherness" of the "opposite" sex (p. 123).

The sex/gender relations of our time are much more complex and dynamic than any continuum or dichotomy based on othering or otherness could ever capture. This work will back up this notion. In addition, making male bodies visible (and in turn knowable) contributes to an enriched understanding of what goes into gendered ordering. Rather than 'male' being just the opposite of 'female', male becomes a dynamic system of ordering.

b) The Intertextual Male Subject and Identity

Uncertain cultural times breeds inconsistency and contradictions about male subjectivities, bodies and identities thereby further showing how male is a dynamic system. Meanings which become built into male bodily codes are a function of numerous messages existing within an *intertextual* cultural plane.

> In films, television programs, advertising, newspapers, popular songs and novels, in *narratives and images that press in from every side*, men are invited to

> recognize themselves in the masculine myth. The myth posits masculinity as natural, normal and universal (Easthope 1990: 166, emphasis added).

Being or doing 'male' or 'female' becomes a public requirement which gets played out through public and publicized bodies 'from every side'. However, this process of public bodily scrutiny has not been the same for females as it has been for males. Males and their bodies, and the relationship between them, has somehow remained outside of public scrutiny. Thomas (1996) notes that

> the traditional relationship between men and their bodies has never been a spoken one; rather, it has been marked by a profound if not pronounced anxiety, one that refuses to speak, refuses to see. In the construction of normative masculinity, the question of the body - of its speakability, its visibility, its representability - historically has been displaced onto the other, onto the feminine. ...Masculinization, the attribution of another set of traits (activity, invulnerability, mastery) to a differently sexed body, is also an effect, although until quite recently one that has not been subjected to critical, oppositional reading (p. 12).

In this way, to be a man (subject), one must learn to do so through an anxiety built upon and around an*other* (whatever form that other may take on). In turn, this process of subjection through othering takes place upon the canvas of the male body. The male body that exists within an intertextual plane of reference becomes the very canvas upon which masculinities are painted and drawn. Building a so-called 'masculine' male subjectivity through the codes of a 'male' body is then characterized and informed by intertextuality and perhaps inconsistency. Messages, narrations and fictions about 'how to be a man' come in many different competing and conflicting forms, venues, spaces, and discourses. As Fiske (1989) notes, "[a]s everyday life is experienced fluidly, through shifting social allegiances, these points of pertinence must be multiple, open to social rather than textual determinations, and transient" (p. 130). Kellner (1995) comments on the same phenomenon when he says that "[his] analyses thus suggest that in a postmodern image culture, the images, scenes, stories, and cultural texts of media culture offer a wealth of subject positions which in turn help structure individual identity" (p. 257).

This plethora of transient subject positions offered up through ads takes on many different intertextual forms and discourses, often working through seriality and repetition of messages and narratives (to be discussed in the thesis.) For example, the alternate frames of reference (including content within male and female oriented magazines, movies, books, television programs, and lyrics of popular songs) differently inform the reader about masculinities and male (representative) subjectivities. In turn, these intertextual forms are plagued by inconsistency and contradiction in terms of expected sexed or gendered boundaries and expectations. The masculine subject positions which are offered up from within these intertextual spaces then inform individual males how to both be a man and, how *not* to be a man.

What it actually *means* to be a man becomes at best, convoluted, at worst a source of self and identity confusion. Kimmel (1987) notes "That men are today confused about what it means to be a "real man" - that masculinity in "crisis" - has become a cultural commonplace, staring down at us from every magazine rack and television talk show in the country" (p. 121). In short, few men simply 'know' how to be a man. For the most part, it is something to be learned and negotiated, forcing each man to push the boundaries and limits of what they have been told they 'are' not (i.e., "real men don't eat quiche", real men are not mice), and what they are expected to be (i.e., tough, solid, aggressive). This does not guarantee that men will ever become 'real men'. It is not that men do not know how to be a man, but rather it is a function of contingencies, of context. To be man in one context may mean being less of a man in others. As well, throughout all of this, there are many ways to be a man (e.g., being a gentleman, being a good provider, being tough, being macho, taking it like a man) according to different masculinities. All of these, at times, contradict each other.

What then makes up this mythical masculinity, the dominant version of what a man *is*? This becomes difficult to determine given that the myth (although it may be real) is about something that is not essential and not real. Masculinity is not 'real' in any essential way. Easthope (1990) states that

> [i]n the dominant version masculinity is a myth not because it is not real. In fact, as the examples of popular culture have shown, its reality saturates modern culture. It is a myth in the sense that it is a wish for what is impossible, that masculinity should be like air, everywhere and the same all the way through (p. 164).

Men cannot be the same 'man' in all contexts. Being a 'real' man changes, notions of masculinity change. And representations of the male body vary according to different spaces and places. For example, ads in fashion magazines depict aesthetic male bodies and masculinities which are foregrounded and displayed in a commodified way that in turn forces the foreclosure of dominant assumptions and logistics of Masculinity. Other magazines feature other masculinities. The wish or desire to be a 'total' man implodes in on itself, as all of this difference cannot make up a total and harmonious narrative of masculinity. The myth that perpetuates and sustains this desire cannot be fixed or pinned down. Silverman (1992) notes that

> the dominant fiction is more than the ideological system through which the normative subject lives in its imaginary relation to the symbolic order. It is also informed by what Ernesto Laclau calls a "will to 'totality'"; it is the mechanism by which a society "tries to institute itself as such on the basis of closure, of the fixation of meaning, of the non-recognition of the infinite play of differences." *The dominant fiction neutralizes the contradictions which organize the social formation by fostering collective identifications and desires, identification and desires which have a range of effects, but which are first and foremost constitutive of sexual difference* (p. 54, emphasis added).

The definitions of male and female assume a fixed meaning. They are willed to be totalities. Within such a totality the meaning of what makes a man a man or a woman a woman is assumed to be static in its 'play' of difference. But we see that the dominant fiction of what it means to be a man cannot neutralize contradictions about masculinities. Hence, what it means to be a man is always in flux, always being compared to itself and to others, which is in turn the source of male anxiety or insecurity. Masculinity, and myths related to it, are NOT the 'same all the way through'. The reproductions and representations of masculinities rely on contingencies, on dynamics such as anxiety and insecurity which then become essential to an understanding of representations of male bodies.

Primarily, masculinity becomes produced through an anxiety based on others (e.g., other races, other masculinities, femininity, females). Masculinity and male bodies are characterized by a constant struggle against these others. This struggle to maintain a masculine male body in the face of these others is tied to *anxiety* and *insecurity based on what men are not*. Males must be men. One thing that males are definitely not is female. Because of imagined sexual difference (man versus woman), to be a man means to not be female or feminine. For example, Flannigan-Saint-Aubin notes that

> [f]or the little boy, masculinity is experienced as constant insecurity in face of the threat of feminine absorption; the ubiquitous fear that one's sense of maleness and masculinity are in danger, what theorists label "symbiosis anxiety," is a major factor in the creation and experience of masculinity (as seen in the edited book by Brod &Kaufman 1994: 245).

Here we see that a category which is taken to be real and solid (being male or being masculine) is really based on something not whole in itself, but rather is based on a *lack*, or on an *other*. Males then learn how to be a man through ideology which is based and characterized by what one should not be, by what a male is supposed to be excluded from being. So, perhaps common among all of the strains which help to create the illusion of a unified masculinity is the idea that at the very root of the 'masculine' lies an inherent and continuous struggle (dislike? disdain?) against one of its others: the feminine. (Some may disagree with this analysis of how male is defined in terms of its opposition to the female, arguing that it becomes problematic when we ask how the feminine is then formed. This creates a predicament where we are asking which came first, the 'chicken or the egg'?

How does either come to be defined if they are both defined against each other? This remains problematic.) However, the visibility/invisibility of male bodies remains in many ways relational to the positioning of one of their cultural others, the female body. Much like how codes of femininity become inscribed or etched onto the female canvas (body) (e.g., shaving and waxing of body hair, wearing make-up, etc), the masculine struggle (against others) is played out on the male body. Thomas (1996) says that his

> argument is that males accede to the dominant fiction and identify with normative masculinity and its fictions of dominance by learning how to assuage this anxiety; the *mechanisms of assuagement are ideologically embedded in cultural modes of representational containment that govern and restrict the visibility of male bodies and male bodily productions* (p. 3, emphasis added).

The male body as "canvas for masculinity" is subject to hypermasculinized and hyperrealized idealizations of the male body, a masculine masterpiece. Idealized images of male bodies in ads create anxiety for other males to varying extents (e.g., hypermasculinity makes 'regular' masculinity seem weak). They provide the yard measure for what a 'real' man looks like, and in turn, what a real man is within a certain time, space or venue. "Baudrillard (1983a, 1983b) has pushed this logic even further to draw attention to the overload of information provided by the media which now confront us with an endless flow of fascinating images and simulations, so that 'TV is the world'" (Featherstone 1991: 68). These simulations of male bodies work to produce THE (or at least *a* believable) reality. In this way, the male body is linked to a number of now 'masculine', but essentially arbitrary signifieds. Reality is *made* real. As Day (1990) notes, "The habit of belief survives and it is this which is exploited by all sophisticated ploys of advertising with the result that while belief is thereby created there is nothing to which it can attach itself" (p. 4). In effect, the referent remains absent (there may be no such thing as a real man), but is presented through the signifier and signified as being full, meaningful, and robust. Male (hyper)reality is *made* real.

As such, Masculinity is hyperreal. Baudrillard (1988) explains "hyperreality in which the simulation of reality is more real than the thing itself" (as cited in Lemert, 1997: 27). Simulated Masculinity does not hold the same constant fixed meaning, and these unfixed meanings and male ideals exist in hyperreal space. Male representations in ads are hyperreal simulations. But people see these representations as reality even though they are mediated and manipulated by advertisers.

> This strange notion can be so because, today, culture is, as cultural theorists would put it, mediated. The media, notably television, are literally media (or, more simply, tools) through which we gain a "sense of the world." That sense may be expanded, displaced, distorted, perverted, intensified, and more. It may be, in our view, good or bad. But the important fact is that when we live in a culture where culture is mediated our sense of reality is, to some important degree, mediated; hence (further) susceptible to intrusions and perhaps corruptions through the process of mediation (Lemert 1997: 28).

Idealized male bodies rely on this mediation between hyperreal and the real. These negotiations are incorporated into our subjectivities and identities. The audience relies on tacit knowledge about how 'men are' ('How ***I*** am'), and what masculinity means in order for the message to 'make sense' in the ways that it does.

To help illustrate this point, I would like to reveal something which took place when I was doing research for this project. I was at the university bookstore, scouring through magazines for more ads to be included in my analysis. A group of two males and one female were flipping through magazines as well, looking at the images within the pages. They turned the page to a male subject who was quite buff and toned. One of the males then said to his friends, "like he's not airbrushed, eh?". This simple sentence is indicative of what males (much like females in the present and past) are reacting to and being exposed to via these hyperreal images of othered, perfected, females and males within media culture. They learn what is real, what makes a 'real man', or a 'man real' through the dynamic of what they see from the outside (perfect male bodies, so perfect they must be airbrushed), and what they feel they know on the inside of the self in regard to their own bodies and selves (which can be nothing but *less* than perfect).

What *is* male is not so simple to determine. What seems male is in many cases more real than reality (e.g., the males at the university bookstore looking at the idealized male image and thinking it must be airbrushed). The example of the males in the bookstore also helps illustrate the *hyperreal* plane wherein masculinity is created and recreated. "Like he's not airbrushed" becomes an excuse, a rationale for that male seeing what he presumably takes to be an ideal type, an idealized unreal representation of the 'less real', everyday male bodies. Masculinity, especially in relation to the male body, becomes more real than 'reality' (reality meaning what we see on a day to day basis). In this way, the representations of the male body, the simulations of the male form, work their way into the popular consciousness, informing males in one way or another about how to be a man. The hyperreal and the 'real' must then be negotiated. Somewhere in this process, the hyperreal and the real (or everyday) start to become blurred.

Masculinized narrations (dominant fictions) both relay information through this process of inclusion (what is 'really' male) and exclusion (what is not male). This serves to reinforce represented content as 'real'. In this case, although masculinity is being negotiated through the imaged (imagined) male body, it is also being (re)presented as definitive hyperreal 'Reality'. Simulations of men are seemingly more real than reality – more real than the everyday reality of being male. Any attempt to chart out what is going on with male bodies will be difficult as the meanings of masculinity are riddled with hyperreal inconsistencies and contradictions in their representation. Even hyperreal men are not the same all the way through, across representational venues. This relationship between masculine hyperrealism (idealized representations of male bodies) and the assumption of mythical (and therefore unreal vs. real) masculinity we see in popular culture serves as a guiding tenet for this work. We live everywhere already in an 'aesthetics hallucination' of reality in so far as we are embodied beings, living in material bodies sculpted and formed into gendered and sexed realities. Yet at some levels masculinity remains a myth. It is both reality and myth, yet it is neither. All of this takes form on the canvas of both 'real' everyday bodies and representations of hyperreal male bodies in ads.

c) What is a huMAN body?

Human bodies are then ob(sub)jects which are complicated and negotiated, in that the body is not merely 'a body', but also a tangible, material display of culturally located subjectivity. Dutton (1995) notes that

> [t]he pervasive ideal of the perfectible body has been for 2500 years of western civilisation [sic] a reminder that the body is something more than itself - the mirror and form of our human aspirations, the outward and visible signs of human perfectibility (p. 9).

The body then becomes an object which stands for something, for a subject and a culture. Bodies are clues as to what the subject is like, how the subject is or seems to be. In addition, the body is the vehicle by which we move and live in the world. We live, breathe, and act and 'are' through our bodies, truly making our bodies more than just that to which the word 'body' becomes a referent for. Our bodies then are not only biological objects, but are also socially created and negotiated image projectors.

> The *physicality* of the body establishes some of the potentials and limits for what we can do with our bodies, but these limits are not always absolutely fixed. The social world enters the physical body as we develop skills and capacities, altering even the body's molecular structure, its anatomy, physiology, and metabolism.

> The body is thus a sturdy but fragile thing, an historical matter of political struggle (Zita 1998: 4).

Truly, "Everyday life is therefore fundamentally about the production and reproduction of bodies" (Nettleton and Watson, 1998: 2). However, if the body essentially 'means' more than just itself, if the body is more than just a 'material' body (e.g., skin, organs, functions), it means something very different for different people (e.g., males and females). One part of a body on a male (e.g., moustache) can mean something very different when located on a female body. As such, male and female (gendered and sexed) bodies are treated, looked at, ogled, mimicked, and desired in different ways. In turn, male and female bodies take on different locations in terms of a social stage.

We have established that "[m]odernity has been especially squeamish, it seems, about the male body" (Bordo 1999: 28). Because of this, female and male bodies have been accorded different spaces, places, visibilities and meanings. The male body has been afforded the more hidden spaces, while female bodies have been placed in the foreground. Female bodies are often highlighted as bodies, while male bodies are somewhere other than on center stage. As Coward (1985) notes:

> [o]ur society has been saturated with images of women's bodies and representations of women's sexuality. Under this sheer weight of attention to women's bodies we seem to have become blind to something. Nobody seems to have noticed that men's bodies have quietly absented themselves. Somewhere along the line, men have managed to keep out of the glare, escaping from the relentless activity of sexual definitions. In spite of ideology which would have us believe that women's sexuality is an enigma, it is in reality men's bodies, men's sexuality which is the true "dark continent" of this society (p. 227, as quoted in Thomas 1996: 15).

Although the male body and arguably masculinity as well have been called the 'real' dark continent, unexplored and unobserved, we could say, as Connell does (1995: 45), that 'real', true masculinity proceeds *directly* from male bodies, thereby eliminating most if not all of the 'darkness' or hidden aspects of male bodies. Masculinity, or 'true masculinity' rather is then supposedly available for all who wish to know it via the male body. But presenting the male body in this way becomes problematic when we start to look at the contradictions, the inconsistency, the lacks and gaps apparent when we see supposed markers of 'true' masculinity where they perhaps should not be. For example, what happens when we see masculine or male characteristics played out and upon female bodies, such as with the case of so called butch lesbians or female body builders? True masculinity then, does not proceed directly from male bodies. These so-called visible 'true markers' found on and from the masculinized body (e.g., tattoos? muscle? what?) are un-true, invalid, incorrect, and ultimately useless as symbols for what 'man' *is*.

In 'real life' numerous messages about masculinity, male subjectivities, and male bodies are pervasive and ever-present within contemporary Western culture, despite an arguable 'narrow and partial existence' (Watson 1998: 18) of 'true' masculinity. In addition, these varied forms of masculinity exist on the same plane as the Masculine myth. They all exist together. However, the dominant fiction of being a Man remains somewhat solid despite othered representations of how to be male. We all seem to know what a man is (e.g., hard, not emotional, strong, etc), despite the existence of other softer and even more feminized representations of masculinity. This myth of Masculinity then holds a special place, in that men seem to live both inside and outside of it. The myth of Masculinity is at the same time drawn from and denied. Easthope (1990) says that

> [c]learly men do not live out the masculine myth imposed by the stories and images of the dominant culture. But neither can they live completely outside the myth, since it pervades the culture. Its coercive *power* is active everywhere - not just on screens, hoardings and paper, but *inside our own heads* (p. 167 emphasis added).

The myth takes form not only from the 'outside' of the self, but also on the 'inside' of ourselves, 'in our own heads'. The word 'our' is meant to mean not only males, however, but rather all people of Western culture. Both males and females contribute and negotiate what is male (masculine), and what is female (feminine). Indeed, there can be no 'male' without something serving as 'other than' male.

This coercive othered power is not only present as an agent from the outside in the form of the masculine myth, but also one which comes from inside our own selves, in our heads, regardless of the sex of one's body. We internalize the myths to some degree. Therefore, notions of subjectivities stemming or originating on some levels from outside of bodily objectivities must be engaged. To a certain degree, people learn how to be 'themselves' and how to be a sexed self from outside themselves and their bodies. This means that not only is the subjectification of the male 'self' contingent upon power relations operating on the inside and outside, but also calls us to question exactly what is being included and excluded from the dynamic and fluid creation of masculine bodies.

d) A Separation from Male Bodies in Sports

The male body within men's studies literature, if mentioned at all, is often talked about in terms of the physicality of sports (Abbott 1987: 47; Kimmel and Messner, 1998: 353; Horrocks 1995: 147). Indeed, male bodies in sports are really the only academic arena where the male body is talked about as a body. Sport is about using and watching bodies. This literature is useful in that it provides us with an understanding about how boys become men through sports. Whitson (1990) notes that "[i]f boys simply grew into men and that was that, the efforts described to teach boys how to be men would be redundant. We can suggest then that "becoming a man" is something that boys ... work at" (p.22).

My work takes off from this point. The treatment of the male body in sport literature offers a specific take on the male body. As I see it, boys learn how to be a man through their bodies, and the regulation of their bodies through sport, but the codes of the male body are not explicitly addressed. I wish to look at the male body in a different arena: one which *directly* focuses on the male body as aesthetic, rather than athletic.

e) Why does the male body need to be highlighted as body?

In many ways, Masculinity relies on and requires that its boundaries and very make-up remain hidden. As Gallop (1988) notes, "men have their masculine identities to gain from being estranged from their bodies and dominating the bodies of others" (as quoted in Thomas 1996:12). As such, more research, analysis and theoretical scrutiny in relation to meanings of the male body needs to be explored. The male body as a Masculine body is not out in the open, and therefore not open to question. Males are invisible as *men*. Being a man becomes taken for granted, naturalized. Seeing masculinity, or seeing men becomes a novel phenomenon. Easthope (1990) notes that "[t]he masculine myth has always tried to perpetuate its power by feigning invisibility. As soon as masculinity can be seen *as* masculinity, its power is challenged, it is called into question..."(pp. 167-168). In effect, as soon as we can see masculinity and how it is used to make and maintain male bodies, the power structure it operates within and upon begins to become visible and in turn, knowable.

The invisibility of the male body is necessary to reproduce male power, male hegemony. To be able to see the male body as a body, vulnerable and human, fosters a certain questioning of hegemonic male power in general which is not possible when what is 'male' remains hidden. Hegemonic male power does not occur or exist in isolation. Others are involved and have a stake in this territorialized gender landscape. This task of making the male subject and body visible allows for a better understanding of the investments in the gender/sex schema or landscape where hegemonic power is located. As Thomas (1996) notes:

> [c]onsequently, a silence about bodily masculinity must be involved in the reproduction of that devaluation [of anything feminine] and hence oppressive

> gender relations. Thus I consider the theoretical project of making the production(s) of masculinity and of the male body visible to be an at least potentially transformative political intervention into the social reproduction of gender (p. 16).

Breaking apart what it means to be a man from its cultural and social heritage or location serves to mess up not only masculinity, but a more general gender ordering which values male, and devalues female. By messing up what it means to be a man, or at least pulling apart negotiated attachments to what makes a man, we can see the production and valuation of male and female. This relates to the goals of this project, removing the male body from its invisible pedestal. By dismantling the male body it becomes less solid, more knowable, less mystified, and less given. The male body and the meanings attached to those bodies become unraveled.

The literature seems to back up this notion. As Easthope (1986) states, "Social change is necessary and a precondition of such change is an attempt to *understand* masculinity, to make it visible" (p. 7). Relatedly, Silverman (1992) notes that "masculinity impinges with such force upon femininity [that] to effect a large-scale reconfiguration of male identification and desire would, at the very least, permit female subjectivity to be lived differently than it is at present" (pp. 2-3). Making the male body more visible as a body, as a system, will shed light on female bodies and subjectivities.

This visibility is contained by and limited to certain venues. I would argue that for the most part, men on the whole do not pay that much attention to their looks. (Recent Kellogg's ads on TV play on this notion as well. Male bodies do not have to be perfect, and Kellogg's posits that women should start to think the same way about their bodies.) However, in certain venues a great deal of attention is paid to male bodies (e.g., Brad Pitt's washboard abs in Thelma and Louise; Salon Selectives TV ads where a woman mentally changes her dowdy mate into a stud; and numerous print ads which depict perfect male bodies in order to sell products.)

Further speculation on these issues will contribute to a better understanding of how gendered bodies are invoked within certain instances. In many cases, the invocation both challenges *and* reproduces existing hegemonic assumptions about female and male bodies. Taking an active role in exposing how masculinities and male codes are inscribed onto the male body lessens the seemingly 'natural' hegemonic grip masculinities have on sexed and gendered ordering. Whether the gender ordering is being challenged or is being made visible as a reproduction of hegemony, the ordering itself becomes less set in stone.

f) Consuming, and Looking

Today, commodified bodies (both male and female) are selling desired products. Magazine ads sub(ob)jectify bodies as commodified representative entities. Baudrillard's theory of 'commodity-sign' builds on Saussurian notions involving sign and self referential signifiers, (Featherstone 1991: 68) and highlights the ways in which the male body is being used within imaged representations and simulations of itself to promote something other than (him)itself, an ideal (signified). This ideal is completely and perhaps arbitrarily linked to the referent; the notion of a 'real man'.

> Baudrillard developed a theory of the commodity-sign, in which he pointed to the way in which the commodity has become the sign in the Saussurian sense with its meaning arbitrarily determined by its position in a self-referential set of signifiers (Featherstone 1991: 68).

Signs, bodies and subjectivities become linked with consumption. As Day (1990) notes, "we are all constructed and addressed as consumers and our social identity is largely based on our patterns of consumption" (p. 5). Here we begin to see just how tightly knit consumerism and our 'own 'subjectivities and bodies have become. In a sense, we come to know ourselves as subjects and as bodies though objects, through what we *own* and call our own.

Of course, consumed and commodified bodies exist to be looked at, to be judged. They are objects of display. In the past, the object of display was usually female. This contributes to how we look, and what we look at.

> Once this regime of looking has lined up active with masculine and passive with feminine, it is then able to distribute sexual desire and narcissism into two categories. Men are invited to desire women by actively looking at them, women to identify with the images passively looked at (Easthope 1990: 137).

Looking then becomes a patriarchical undertaking. Mulvey (1989) also showed us that 'looking' has a patriarchal content and context, in that men do the looking, women are to be looked at. She notes that

> [i]n a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *looked-at-ness* (p. 19).

Representations of the Male body in part stem from various commodifications and objectifications. This suggests that males as well as females can be depicted as objects to be looked at. Males also convey 'looked-at-ness'. Male and female bodies can be both commodified, and can both be consumed. Conversely, both males and females can be depicted as those who do the looking and the consuming. Both females and males can be depicted at one and the same time as both object of the gaze, and the gazing subject. Men look at women, and men also look at other men. Women look at other women, and women certainly look at men.

One could argue that the objectified commodified position male bodies are given within advertisement culture are in part due to the demand of women who want to *look at* men and the perfect male body. Take for example the following article (Cosmopolitan, July 1999, pg. 172), titled "Butt Watch '99". This title is placed over top of a photograph of a naked white male shown from behind. His back is hairless and tanned. His naked buttocks looks white in comparison. He has dark brown hair. He is streamlined and muscular. The article reads "Girls don't make passes at men without asses!".

> Enough with the endless gushing over men's pecs, abdomens, hairdos, and - oh, please - faces. All that other stuff is icing on the cake. Or cakes, that is. Let's take this moment to celebrate a great unsung hero: a man's butt (p.173).

Women look at men, and, expect to look at aesthetically pleasing male bodies. Another section of text from the article reads, "Butt seriously: It's the season for mooning over guys' great booties" (p. 175). Given this, what does it mean that male bodies are being positioned in the foreground, becoming the object of the gaze? In turn, what does this say in relation to the gendered ordering and meaning of looking? In certain ways, the gendered ordering is both challenged and preserved. Yes, certain women do want to look at, or be with, aesthetically appealing men. Yet, boundaries of maleness must be preserved at the same time. Certain expectations of traditional masculinity must remain intact. For example, a woman may not want her boyfriend, or the object of her gaze to have a hairy back. But that same woman also does not want to know about how her boyfriend, or object of her gaze has waxed his back in order for it to appear smooth and hairless. Yes, women expect men to look good, but this does not necessarily mean they want to know every aesthetic act or product used in order to achieve that pleasing aesthetic illusion. Men should look good, but much is invested in covering up or choosing to ignore the male beauty process. This goes back to my dating experience. The male I was dating was also an athlete. To a certain extent, the attention he paid to his body was excused because he was an athlete. But other types of behavior could not be so easily justified by invoking the athletic identity. It was here where the boundaries and expectations of male aesthetic (or anti-aesthetic) were violated. This male talked about, and wanted to be beautiful over and above athletics and sport. This challenged the traditional expectation that men do not care how they look. I wanted him to look good without seeming so invested. Men are then expected to look good, but to look good with minimal effort (or at least *appear* to look good with minimal effort).

g) Writing the Body

The body becomes sexed through what the subject sees (imaged) and reads. In effect, both male and female bodies become sexed and subjectified through discourse, both imaged and written. Dallery (1989), who is speaking about the work of Silverman (1984: 320-349), notes that

> [t]hrough discourse the human body is territorialized into a male or female body. The meanings of the body in discourse actually shape the materiality of the real body and its complementary desires. ... A "real" body prior to discourse is meaningless (Dallery 1989, in the edited book by Jaggar and Bordo 1989: 59).

What we can take from this is that there is no 'real' body before and separate from the meanings which we ascribe to bodies. "Writing the body, then, is both *constative* and performative. It signifies those bodily territories that have been kept under seal; it figures the body" (Dallery 1989: 59, emphasis in original). In this way, the meanings we give to bodies require that bodies 'be' male or female through discourse. The body is bullied into 'being' something it was not before - before the discourse molded material bodies and meanings attached to them. Imagined bodies of both males and females become imaged and textualized within advertising culture. This contributes to popular discourse about bodies. The subject, the images, and the imagined expectations of male and female all work together to form an ordering of male and female material bodies.

h) Identity Making and Faking

Although this project does not focus specifically on male experience or subjectivities, I feel it is important to take a look at how ad discourse on the male body *could* possibly affect male identities and subjectivities.

'Female' and 'male' bodies are the product of gender explanations. They are assumed to be separate, distinct entities from each other because male and female bodies are built around difference. Indeed, we have seen how they are created and maintained in direct opposition to each other. However, post-modernity is characterized by instability, and the (gendered) self is not exempt from being touched and reconfigured by such instability. Our bodies, our selves and our very identities are no longer stable givens. (Although the desire for a stable self remains intact. One example of this is trying to 'find yourself' or 'know yourself' - two common phrases used relatively unproblematically in Western culture, especially media culture. Sentiments such as these suggest that there is a stable self to find and know.) Because humans are embodied, the control of and meanings given to various bodies in our culture influences how we conceive of our (often fluid and unstable) perceptions of self and identity. Giddens (1991) notes that within modernity

> [t]he body was a 'given', the often inconvenient and inadequate seat of the self. With the increasing invasion of the body by abstract systems all this becomes altered. The body, like the self, becomes a site of interaction, appropriation and reappropriation, linking reflexively organized processes and systematically ordered expert knowledge (p. 218 as quoted in Nettleton and Watson 1998: 7).

Identifying with, and locating identity within a Grand narrative of being a man or a woman is problematic. Identifying yourself as male or female cannot be the grand explanation or justification of identity. "In short then, postmodernity is that culture in which these metanarratives are no longer considered completely legitimate and, thus, are not universally held to be completely true" (Lemert 1997: 39). There is constant interaction, reappropriation and forced repetition of any given gender identity. This creates a predicament wherein so far as self identity is tied up with *gender* identities, how one conceives of ones-'self' will inevitably be uncertain and fluid as a result of these constant and unfixed gender negotiations. Butler (1993) notes that

> [o]ne might consider that identification is always an ambivalent process. Identifying with a gender under contemporary regimes of power involves identifying with a set of norms that are and are not realizable, and whose power

> and status precede the identifications by which they are insistently approximated. This "being a man" and "being a woman" are internally unstable affairs (p. 126).

In spite of the fact that gender and sex is wrought with internal inconsistencies and contradictions, people continue to link them*selves* to certain gendered traits (but not others) in order to make up some sort of a personal (but not necessarily private) identity. These gender traits often take form on the body as well as within the identity of that subject. Identities then come from bodies which are gendered to mean certain things. These gendered meanings come from the social. The 'individual' must draw from a pool of traits which is socially determined, any one 'individual' is really an amalgamation or variant combination of a number of inherently social, other, outside fragmentations of what is offered to them from the realm of the gendered public or social. As Silverman (1992) notes, "[i]dentity, as psychoanalysis has taught us, necessitates the internalization of a series of things which are at first instance external" (p. 126). The external (body) then dictates to some extent the internal (subjectivity) through what discourse tells us about what the signs mean. Individuals are not really in any sense 'individual', but rather a function of what they bring in from the outside of them-Selves in order to make up a seemingly private 'self' (gendered or not) based on bodies.

In a sense then, what we desire ourselves to be, and in turn, desire for an identity of any sort, comes from not inside, but outside 'ourselves'. Weed (1989) notes "that one's desire may not be one's own, that what one calls self may be constructed elsewhere" (p. xv). Self desire then becomes confused in that a notion of 'the self' is not only non-essential, but perhaps even irrelevant to so called 'self desires'. They become desires which come from 'outside' ourselves, and therefore both come from and take the form of the other. If desire is seen as a pivotal point of departure for a sense of a personal identity, upon closer scrutiny, this becomes more and more difficult (if not impossible) to pin down. Desire for a self (and a particular body), as well as *the* self (and the body), comes from and becomes social.

Self identity, however formulated by the subject, is played out on different levels (i.e., behavior, bodily transformations, the use of language). The self is an actor. One performs (through) this fragmented piece-meal identity. However, the role which one is performing is changing and fluid. As Butler (1993) notes, one of the things that makes a role or self seemingly stable is the very *repetition* of the gendered performance.

> This is not a subject who stands back from its identifications and decides instrumentally how or whether to work each of them today; on the contrary, the subject is the incoherent and mobilized imbrication of identifications; it is constituted in and through the iterability of its performance, a repetition which works at once to legitimate and delegitimate the *realness norms* by which it is produced (p. 131, emphasis added).

What we see (representations of what a man or woman 'is') is what we become through a process of self identification and supposed image and text mastery and negotiation. These 'realness norms' to which Butler refers make up what is included within the categories of *being* a man or woman. One is a man or woman if they can look the part, act accordingly, do so repeatedly, and portray (represent?) what is ultimately given or posited as gendered reality.

What sorts of clues, cues, markers, or displays are drawn upon in order to convey, convince or produce an identification with 'manliness' norms? Does being a man reside solely from outward appearance? Or does being a man mean something else, something more attitudinal or behavioral? I am arguing that 'manliness' (both attitudinal and/or behavioral displays) are reflected within male visible bodily signs. A reading of these signs then provides glimpses of what it takes (and means) to be a 'man'.

Part 3: Signs, Messages, and Reading Images

a) The Selling of Products, Lifestyles, Identities

Ads are located within a certain specific cultural location, that being a capitalist economy. In effect, not only do advertising images sell a desire for a product, but they are also selling certain capitalistic ideas, ideals and lifestyles. In this way bodies, products and certain lifestyles are purchasable. Signs which indicate certain lifestyles can be bought. Kellner (1995) illustrates this point when he says that a reading of ads

> suggests that advertising is as concerned with selling lifestyles and socially desirable identities, which are associated with their products, as with selling the products themselves - or rather, that advertisers use the *symbolic constructs* with which the consumer is invited to identify or try to induce her to use their product (p. 252, emphasis added).

What the advertisers are actually selling is complex. Products and symbolic constructs of lifestyles are being sold. As well, social desirability and personal gendered and sexed identities are also sold. Kellner (1995) notes how a critical assessment of popular images must be undertaken with a post-modern society in order to be able to see how advertisements contribute to manipulating self identity.

> [I]t is precisely the images which are the vehicles of the subject positions and that therefore critical literacy in a postmodern image culture requires learning how to read images critically and to unpack the relations between images, texts, social trends, and products in commercial culture (p. 252).

Kellner (1995) goes on to note that "[t]his sort of reading of advertising not only helps individuals to resist manipulation, but it also depicts how something as seemingly innocuous as advertising can depict significant shifts in modes and models of identity" (p. 252). Advertisements then do not only provide a vehicle by which producers can display a product, but also serve as sites of production for purchasable socially desirable identities and lifestyles.

These lifestyles and identities do not come to the reader as whole lifestyles and identities. They are more like glimpses or parts. Day (1990) describes them as 'melodramas'.

> The instant as a condition of experience means that the consumer inhabits a disparate, unconnected world where, because everything is repeated, nothing seems to happen. However, this is not how the world is experienced, it is experienced as melodrama and this gives it a kind of spurious unity (p. 5).

Therefore, the transmission of lifestyles through popular media is not as unified as it may 'seam'. In fact, it can be pulled apart by the seams. In turn, not only the lifestyle but also the subjectivities attached to that lifestyle are characterized by these melodramatic qualities and this 'spurious unity'.

Ads determine to some degree the very *location* of the reader. Depending on where the reader is culturally located, the image and text takes on very different meanings. Given that media culture may provide the locations from which a reader can position themselves from in order to read, this becomes an important component when considering exactly *how* ads are read, and where they are read from. Fiske (1989) comments on the importance of the location of the reader when he says that

> [r]eading texts is a complex business; and the complexity of popular texts lies as much in their uses as in their internal structures. The densely woven texture of relationships upon which meanings depend is social rather than textual *and is constructed not by the author in the text, but by the reader:* it occurs at the moment of reading when the social relationships of the reader meet the discursive structure of the text (p. 122, emphasis added).

In effect, the reader is making meaning not only through engaging with the discursive ordering of the text, but also from the subject position and experience the reader holds. Kellner (1995) speaks to how media culture provides the very modes of identity or platforms from where readers are located, further suggesting a dialectical understanding of any ad.

> Media culture thus provides resources for identity and new modes of identity in which look, style, and image replace such things as action and commitment as

> constitutives of identity, of who one is. Once upon a time, it was who you were, what you did, what kind of a person you were - your moral political, and existential choices and commitments, which constituted personal identity. *But today it is how you look, your image, your style, and how you appear that constitutes that identity.* And it is media culture that more and more provides the materials and resources to constitute identities (p. 259 emphasis added).

Reading ads depends on a dynamic reader in certain ways, one who is both reading the ad from a specific location, and also ultimately located not only by their own sense of aesthetic subjectivity but also by the ads that he/she sees and reads. What you see, as well as how you make yourself look constitutes identity. Some would argue that through ads, the reality, representation and identities of dynamic readers as well as the identity of the *subject* of the ad are being called into question.

> From the postmodern perspective, as the pace, extension, and complexity of modern societies accelerate, identity becomes more and more unstable, more and more fragile. Within this situation, the discourses of postmodernity problematic the very notion of identity, claiming that it is a myth and an illusion (Kellner, 1995: 223).

Identity has not exactly been lost within postmodernity. Rather, identity could be said to have become more unstable.

> Rather than identity disappearing in a postmodern society, it is merely subject to new determinations and new forces while offering as well new possibilities, styles, models and forms. Yet the overwhelming variety of possibilities for identity in an affluent image culture no doubt creates highly unstable identities while constantly providing new openings to restructure one's identity (Kellner, 1995: 257).

Many images and texts within advertising culture seek to contain and limit identities by forcing determinations of identity. This is done in order to promote identities which are purchasable, or at least sought out. Identities which require little effort on the part of the consumer are not forced and offered up by ad culture. Identity needs to change if consumption is to remain at a high level. Because of this, identity is often made more real than reality, as hyperreal in order to feed the consumer market. It is compartmentalized, neatly packaged within the ad, but the package must be purchased. The limits of identity come from the product being promoted, and the wish to project and protect certain hyperreal lifestyles and bodies.

It is also important to note that any (neatly packaged) identity experience or subject position, although it may feel unfragmented and complete, is not. As Day (1990) notes, "[t]he processes of advertising, then, locate consumers in an eternal present which, despite being fragmented, is experienced as a unity" (p. 7). Ads work in mythical ways, drawing on seemingly tacit cultural knowledge, in order to position their products in socially desirable locations. In turn, ads usually end up reproducing existing social order. "Like television narratives, advertising too can be seen as providing some functional equivalents of myth. Like myths, ads frequently resolve social contradictions, provide models of identity, and celebrate the existing social order" (Kellner 1995: 247). Ads perpetuate the myths and social order they are drawing on in order to relay forced messages and identities. The process then becomes cyclic, or tautological, in that the myths, social order, and tacit knowledge becomes naturalized in the process of reproduction. These myths work because they cannot be pinned down with certainty to the present time. Although we see something and want it now, we must wait until sometime in the future to get it. Advertising is built around the fact that consumers want what is being advertised *now,* only to have that change once they do purchase the product. Desires are then oriented towards the future time, ultimately never to be realized by the consumer. As Day (1990) notes:

> [i]ronically, this orientation towards a future time, which is intended to take consumers out of their present time only succeeds in keeping them in it. Adverts make consumers desire the future but, because that future is never realized, consumers are imprisoned in an eternal present of desire (p. 5).

In regard to time, ads work by using insecurity in the promotion of an unreachable future time. Day (1990) states that "Advertising promotes insecurity. It encourages consumers to be in a state of affairs - Utopia or their own perfectibility which can never be realized" (p. 4). In many ways the representations within ads (as presented within this future time or not) simulate what it means to be an anxiety riddled male in 'real' life.

b) Intertextual Messages and Images

The notion of the 'individual' comes from the public realm, thereby making any given 'individual' identity, to a certain extent, a reflection of something outside and other to that individual. However, just how this public realm of differing, othering and competing individualities takes its form or forms is highly complex. It operates as a multilevel phenomenon. We learn how to be an 'individual' with a corresponding 'self' identity through what we experience and see within everyday life. We regard human subjects and subjectivities through various forms and frames, such as movies, magazines, television, advertising, friends, acquaintances, strangers, radio, songs, music videos, etc. This multi-range of identity information sources makes the messages which come from these media seem to be omnipresent. Ewen (1992) says that

> [w]e live and breathe an atmosphere where mass images are everywhere in evidence; mass produced, mass distributed. In the streets, in our homes, among a crowd, or alone, they speak to us, overwhelm our vision. Their presence, their messages are givens, unavoidable. Though their history is still relatively short, their prehistory is, for the most part, forgotten, unimaginable (p. xxii).

What we come to know (or think) and how we come to know (or think about) these things, concepts, and images comes to us by way of numerous and varying sources, places and temporally located spaces. We do this often without question as to where these messages and images came into being; without questioning their histories. However, reading meanings into images or texts will (and does) vary depending on history, culture, time and space, or more specifically, on the location of the subject, image or text. As Kellner (1995) notes, "[a] text is constituted by its internal relations and its relation to its *socio-historical situation* and the more relations articulated in a critical reading, the better grasp of a text one may have" (p. 99, emphasis added). This suggests that a reader somehow (whether it is consciously or unconsciously) locates the image, text or message within a historical and social placement or context, and in doing so, will be better able to understand what the image means. By making cognitive connections between what we can see in an image, and where the image is 'coming from', readers then derive specific meaning from reading the ad. Most images and texts in ad culture work by nestling into locations which demand a specific yet *intertextual* reading and understanding. Fiske (1989) highlights this point by using the example of Madonna. He argues that Madonna does not exist on any singular plane. As such, we come to know a seemingly unified 'Madonna' through *many* frames and discourses:

> In popular culture the object of veneration is less the text or artist and more the performer, and the performer, like Madonna, exists only intertextually. No one concert, album, video, poster, or album cover is an adequate text of Madonna. *Intertextual competence is central to the popular productivity of creating meaning from texts* (p. 125, emphasis added).

She, Madonna, exists only in the intertextual. This is parallel to representations of male and female bodies which are embedded within a greater more complex matrix of meaning of those bodies. Bodies only exist in an intertextual frame. For example there are a plethora of products, histories, horror and success stories in regards to identity and 'self' and body formation. These culturally located myths and 'facts' within the whole of popular culture accompany the understanding of a gendered or sexed self and body. All of these are located by the reader in order for them to make meaning from an ad. Given that ads could have an infinite number of readings, rhetorical 'sense making' signs, appeals and strategies allow the reader to make sense of ads in certain ways (and not others) within this space of culturally located intertextual learned competence. "Meaning here is a matter for play, for pleasure, for jouissance and nothing else" (Day 1990: 3). What we 'see' becomes a product of cultural sense making strategies, imaged and textual propaganda, and rhetoric. In addition, the imagery and text used within ads draws on metaphors and operates metonymically in order to create an 'instantaneous' meaning. In effect, the images use gendered metaphor derived from a larger historical popular culture and consciousness. Because metaphors require prior knowledge, and operate on many different levels, the intertextualized meanings become playthings used by readers in order to make meaning.

c) Seriality and Repetition of Messages

If meaning is playful or difficult to pin down to any fixed position, it is partly due to the fact that ads rely on repetition and seriality. Fiske (1989) notes that "[t]he poverty of the individual text in popular culture is linked not only to its intertextual reading practices, but also to its ephemerality and repetitiousness" (p. 125). He notes further that "Constant repetition of commodified images subjectivities, and subjects fits nicely into the routines of our everyday lives" (Fiske 1989: 125). The readings we make from media culture are dependent on that very repetition and seriality. We get messages about sexed and gendered realities through a multitude of sources, spaces and places. These messages would not 'make sense' in the same ways if they were not repeated over and over. In effect, no one image or text can (or does) stand alone, for no one image or text can claim totalization. They are forever incomplete. "Because of their incompleteness, all popular texts have *leaky boundaries*; they flow into each other, they flow into everyday life. Distinctions among texts are as invalid as the distinctions between text and life" (Fiske 1989: 126, emphasis added). Making distinctions among the images and texts is in some ways a futile endeavor, as all images, texts, and messages contribute to the reading of other works. These "leaky boundaries" of meaning enable a reader to read a message by using other meanings. Deriving meaning from texts and images located within ad culture is then not an absolute task, for the bottom line cannot be grounded (especially by any one image). Indeed, there may be no bottom line to be grounded as it is always in some state of flux. Through repetition of images and messages, meanings or readings may seem to be more grounded but cannot be said to be altogether fixed: they allow for a certain degree of play or jouissance. The reading and meaning of the image remains somewhat ephemeral and ungraspable despite its repetition.

However, repeated themes are not unknowable. They can be identified. As Ewen (1992) notes, "[a] prime difficulty in assuming such a task is the seamless and all-encompassing nature of the contemporary cultural landscape. Where to start? What to focus on? How to make sense of an essentially ephemeral culture?" (p. ix). One way to make sense comes in an attempt to unpackage these repeated and serial messages. Although the boundaries may indeed be 'leaky' (where the message of one ad begins and the other ends), we can figure out themes which continue to be repeated and represented. These themes help us understand the representations of male bodies, and what is built into them.

d) Multivalent Readings of Gappy Inconsistencies

Many post-structuralists are calling for 'multivalent' readings of texts and images within ad culture:

> Texts, in the post-structuralist view, should be read as the expression of a multiplicity of voices rather than as the enunciation of one single ideological voice which is then to be specified and attacked. Texts thus require multivalent readings, and a set of critical or textual strategies that will unfold their contradictions, contestatory marginal elements, and structured silences (Kellner 1995: 112).

This type of reading requires the reader to be aware of what is left out of the text or image, in order to better understand the inconsistent meanings which may be located within that image or text. In addition, because both the ad and the reader are located in dynamic 'everyday' life, the possibility that an ad might be read in a multitude of ways must remain open. Everyday life is not static or unchanging, but is characterized by a certain degree of fluidity which an ad then seeks to emulate in certain ways.

> Popular culture is made at the interface between the cultural resources provided by capitalism and everyday life. ... As everyday life is lived and experienced fluidly, through shifting social allegiances, these points of pertinence must be multiple, open to social rather than textual determinations, and transient (Fiske 1989: 129).

The nature of our 'everyday' would then not allow for an image to be readable in *only* one way. They must be open to these transient, open, and social determinations. Boundaries are not that visible, social links are not that strong, determinations are not that static. The inclusion and exclusion of 'what's new' or 'what's hot' changes. Ads must work on a multivalent level, and therefore enable and require multivalent readings.

Given that texts and images are complete with 'leaky' or amorphous boundaries and require multivalent readings, the problem of meaning is further complicated by the fact that popular texts and images are *inconsistent*. Often, many contradictory messages will be contained within any one popular ad or message. The following excerpt from Fiske (1989) demonstrates this contradictory 'failure'.

> The texts of popular culture, then, are full of gaps, contradictions, and inadequacies. It is what aesthetic criticism would call its "failures" that enable the popular text to invite producerly readings; they allow it to "speak" differently in different contexts, in different moments of reading, but this freedom is always struggling against textual (and social) forces that attempt to limit it. The popular text is a text of struggle between forces of *closure and openness* (p. 126, emphasis added).

Here, we see that texts speak differently depending on different contexts. This is due to both 'failures', and a dynamic between closed and open boundaries which produces such inconsistencies and gaps in the reading. Advertisers are casting a wider net of meaning in order to catch more and more consumers. A critical reader can locate the 'failures' of the messages. The *process* of reading images, texts, and ads requires that the reader not just read in order to *produce* meaning, but also to decipher meaning.

> Telling or revealing the truth hidden below the surface is the act of a closed, disciplinary text and *requires decipherment rather than reading*. Showing the obvious leaves the interior unspoken, unwritten; it makes gaps and spaces in the text for the *producerly reader* to fill from his or her social experience and thus to construct links between the text and that experience (Fiske 1989: 122 emphasis added).

Reading or deciphering images becomes an active process. A reading is *produced* by the reader in *producerly* ways. It is done by employing certain strategies which are not straightforward. It is not a matter of the reader simply looking at something, and automatically taking or internalizing a hard and fast message. There is more at play, and at stake here. "There is a difference between the representation of social forces or values and the experience of them in everyday life. Popular readers enter the represented world of the text at will and bring back from it the meanings and pleasures that they choose" (Fiske 1989: 133). Here, we see that 'choice' becomes important for the reading and understanding of the image or text. However, choices in regard to how to behave or what to buy or how to look are culturally and socially located. So then, the language of 'choice', is not as neutral as it may seem to be in the above quote. Kellner (1995) comments further on this when he talks about the production of meaning from *Marlboro* ads when he says that the

> text works to get the reader to identify with the product and to produce a pleasurable feeling from the feat of producing meaning, from reading the ambiguous text, that is presumably then transferred to and associated with the product, so that the image of Marlboro is associated with free choice and creativity (p. 255).

By deciphering the code of the image or text, the product becomes more pleasurable to the (now producerly and detective like) reader.

Readers must not only produce meaning from what is in an image or text, one must be aware of what is *left out* of the image or text in order to see the ideological underpinnings of what is allowing the ad to 'work' or make sense. Kellner (1995) notes that "One should also pay attention to what is left out of ideological texts, for it is often the exclusions and silences that reveal the ideological project of the text" (p. 113). Furthermore, Kellner (1995) suggests that it is the logistics of ideologies which breed textual contradictions when he says that "ideologies may come into contradiction with themselves or fail, and thus demonstrates the cracks and fissures, vulnerabilities and weak points, and gaps within hegemonic ideology itself" (p. 113). For example, we see that the cultural project of 'male' is itself flawed and gappy as a category. Being a 'male' is inherently doomed to failure due to these cracks within hegemonic masculine ideology as a system of ordering. In regard to male bodies, a number of failures can be located and foregrounded within the ads. They do not seem to 'make sense' or fit into place given existing methods of understanding traditionally masculine male bodies, subjects and subjectivities. This is suggestive or reflective of the gender contradictions, inconsistencies, or uncertainties which pervade our culture today. "The emblematic significance of the male body has become a central issue in contemporary Western Societies, embodying many of the uncertainties and contradictions of the late 20th century" (Dutton, 1995: 371). As such, contradictory and unstable representations of the male body may be a reflection of the general uncertainty and general inconsistency of our culture to date.

e) Seeing Double? Images and Texts

Advertisements are interesting because they use both images and text. The text/image duo serves to relay one *or* many messages by employing more than one medium. One can draw on the image, or the actual text of the ad, in order to 'read' the messages in the ad. The image and the text function both together and separately in order for the reader to understand the 'whole point' or main message of the ad. This is referred to as an anchoring device within media studies. The text serves to anchor the meaning of an image. In effect, the image and text work to *produce* meaning. It becomes an orchestrated production. We have seen how the image works by way of the representation (image). However, the text itself must be given closer attention apart from the image of the ad.

In a culture which is increasingly reliant on the image first and foremost, the text takes on a very different role in reading ads. Barthes (1977) comments on how the text is sometimes parasitic to the image:

> Firstly, the text constitutes a parasitic message designed to connote the image, to "quicken" it with one or more second order signifieds. In other words, and this is an important historical reversal, the image no longer *illustrates* the word; it is now the words which, structurally, are parasitic to the image (in an edited book by Wees 1989: 51).

Here we see the text as 'hanging' off of, or being produced around, the image. The choice of language here, 'parasitic', brings to mind mental images of disease or unwanted intrusion. However, the text does serve a purpose. Here the parasite metaphor is apt due to the fact that many parasitic relationships rely on a symbiotic relationship between the parasite and the host. In some ways then, the text and the image need each other for a certain type of parasitic survival. They are 'co-evolutionary', to use a term from biology. They need and depend on each other in order to exist and make meaning.

> It is impossible however... that the words "duplicate" the image; in the movement from one structure to the other second signifieds are inevitably developed. What is the relationship of these signifieds cf [sic] connotation to the image? To all appearances, it is one of making explicit, of providing a stress; *the text most often simply amplifying a set of connotations already given in the photograph* (Barthes 1977, in an edited book by Wees 1989: 53, emphasis added).

The text provides a means by which to stress what is already denoted and connoted in the image (and possibly vice versa). (Conversely, the text can also instruct the reader to look at the image in certain ways and *not* others, thereby serving a rather subversive and separate function from that of the image.) In general, the text draws the attention back to more preferred meanings of the image, which serves to police and limit the varied interpretations that could be made by the reader from what she or he sees. Texts then serve as a form of control, making meaning less leaky or ambiguous to the reader. To a certain extent the text *informs* the reader in different ways than does the image. This is important as we then not only image (as well as imagine) our bodies, but we write them as well.

Part 4: Themes from the Ads

(Please note that copyright permission was not obtained in order to reproduce the ads for these purposes. Therefore, each ad will be briefly described to the reader on a separate page.)

a) 'True' Maleness Equals Youth?

Aging bodies become interesting in terms of the aging *male* body. There are a number of myths which surround the aged male body, most of which hold positive connotations (e.g., males don't get wrinkle lines, they get character lines). These include the older male as being wise, rich, powerful, established, and holding a high status within society. Sexiness is also included in these romanticizations of the older male. Sean Connery and Harrison Ford continue to land leading roles in current movies despite their less than perfect aging bodies and appearance.

However, this is not what we see when we look at male bodily representations within ad culture. Although older men may be imagined to be real masculine men, they are not imaged as the ideal way to be a man. Although older men may be romanticized and exalted within the larger media culture, they are located in a different, less visible and less valued position within advertising culture. This is partly because advertising culture demands youth to sell products. Youth is held up as the way to be, the way to look. Because of this, older men are not portrayed as *the* way to be a man because this would exclude older males as a population of consumers; consumers who are being told they need to consume supposedly youthful products and lifestyles. Young male aesthetics are held up and promoted in order to sell products within advertising culture. A specific youthful lifestyle is portrayed in the ads. The products would not sell if old men (and the lifestyle old men are presumed to have) were represented as ideal.

Within consumer society a youthful body forms the dominant ideal. "Indeed it is said to contribute to the body's 'physical capital' (Bourdieu 1984)" (Nettleton and Watson, 1998:18). Accordingly, the types of masculinity found within ads depicts not the aged male who is powerful, wise and has 'character lines'. The type of male we see within advertisement representations is young, unwrinkled, and is not necessarily depicted as being powerful or rich. He is worthy of depiction *because* of his looks – because of his *body* and not his mind or social location. Within these ad images, males are shown because of their looks. It is their youthful aesthetic appeal (*despite* their old age) which makes them worthy of being visible.

This trend runs through all of the ads. In total, I believe there were only a handful (maybe three or four) ads and articles which imaged an older male. If anything, these images of older males serve to highlight male bodies which are not ideal. Old male bodies are then othered. The young, virile, fertile, taut and toned male body becomes the yardstick for which males are to aspire to and compare themselves to. The representations of the young male body then informs men of all ages on how to be a 'man'. This goes against tacit cultural knowledge which suggests that 'real men' do not have to be young and sexy to be desirable. The number of ads featuring of the young, sexual, perfect male bodies suggests otherwise. This in turn, seems to be causing some older othered males to feel uncomfortable in their own skin, so to speak. Morganroth Gullette notes that for the most part, "men have begun to worry more obviously about their physical aging. ... I feel that men are in danger of falling into the same cultural traps laid in the twentieth century for "aging women" "(from a chapter in the edited book by Goldstein 1994: 221).

She speaks that our society seems to be preying on the 'genderless consumer': a male *or* female consumer who is preyed on for one reason alone, their worries about getting older. Youth is a fiction of the consumer industry. In this way, ads serve to alter larger media interpretations of the sexy, wise older male in order to draw greater numbers of males into their consumptive sphere. If older males are pictured, their images are riddled with youthful signs and connotations. The older males are pictured *not* because they look old, but because they look so young, so good, *considering* their age. Take for example the following ad (Fashion, May 1999) for Allure cologne. The text of the ad mentioned reads 'Real men. Real allure'. This forces the reader to connect the imaged male to a real man. His age helps the connection. The male in the image is older, has a weathered face, and a few wrinkles are showing around his eyes and mouth. Yet the way the ad is set up allows the reader to conceive of this image and text in terms of how good this male looks despite his age. The same thing happens with female models such as Lauren Hutton. She models for products which fight aging (e.g. face creams). The reader understands that she is older (especially for a model), and redirects the reading of the ad. These models don't necessarily look good on their own terms. They look good *despite* their age. This forces other older males to feel pressure in that even if they are old, they still have to look good.

Ads are supposed to make males anxious about their physical appearance, much like women have been made to feel anxiety over their own bodies when compared to idealized hyperrealized female forms within ad culture. Hence, anxiety over personal

Fashion, May 1999. The ad shows an older male who is not looking at the camera. He is white, and has some wrinkles around his mouth and eyes. The background of the ad is dark. The male is wearing a dark shirt. His hands are folded over each other. The ad is for a cologne called 'Allure'. The text reads 'Real men. Real Allure. The new men's fragrance from Chanel'. This male is an 'entrepreneur' from 'New York/Los Angeles', according to the remaining text of the ad.

appearance or aesthetics become genderless in that it applies (or is being made to apply) regardless of gender.

Products which promise youth promise to change your life for the better. As male bodies start to sag and wrinkle, the consumer market offers up a plethora of male oriented products (and lifestyle images) to soothe the physical transition from stud, to dud. Take for example the following article titled "Body Shopping" (Men's Health, December 1998, 72-74). The first sentence of the article reads, "What time ruins, the plastic surgeon renews. But can he turn a tub into a man of war?" The article speaks to how older males are getting plastic surgery done to make their bodies more attractive (which essentially means more youthful according to consumer industry). Another ad shows a male in his seventies or eighties (Icon, June 1999) sitting on the edge of a chair. His hair is being blown back, and it looks like he is holding on for dear life. But that is the preferred meaning of the ad. The text reads 'You're old enough to dress yourself'. This older male is being marketed as one who loves life, who takes life 'by the balls' so to speak. Yes, he *is* old enough to dress himself, and presumably old enough to spend his own money on clothes. By presenting old males as children (old enough to dress themselves and buy their own clothes), the ad obviously links old to young. Old people need not be old. They can and *should* buy their youth back. They should take 'life by the balls'. But doing this means you have to *buy* the harness and the reigns. Therefore, appearing youthful is brought back to consumption and purchasing.

Perhaps what we are witnessing is a capitalistic response to a huge market of aging baby boomer males, disenfranchised with bodies that are less than what they once perhaps were, or at least, less than they were thought to be. There is a lot of money to be

Icon, June 1999. This ad is a two page spread in a magazine. On the right hand side is only text, written at an angle to the page. The text says ' You're old enough to dress yourself'. On the right hand side an old white male is pictured, sitting on a chair, with the side of his body facing the camera. His facial expression looks as if he is saying 'ooohhhhh'. His hair is being blown back. His hands are on his knees. He is wearing a sweater and grey pants. He has numerous wrinkles and sagging skin. The ad is for Louis Boston, which has as its caption 'Clothing. Accessories. Ideas'. The background is very dark.

made by making the remaining 50% of the population (males) worried about how they look. As Morganroth Gullette notes:

> Since a male body can learn when young to take on signs of male power through "mental body-images and fantasies[,] muscle tensions, posture, the feel and texture of the body," it can also be taught later on that masculinity recedes. And if aging can be made anxious for men too, there's profit in it. The Baby Boomers are a doomed cohort by their numbers to have their needs manufactured their whole lives long (in a chapter in the edited book by Goldstein 1994: 227).

What we are witnessing through the ads is a lesson on how masculinity does indeed recede with age. If men can be taught that being a real man requires youth, they can be taught that masculinity decreases with age. Accordingly, youth can be brought back through purchasing youthful products.

In some ways it is a shock to see aging males in ads. In a way, it represents a visual admission that men *do* indeed age. After years of cultural rhetoric surrounding the supposed unimportance of the male form (at any age), to now admit that a pleasing *youthful* aesthetic male body now matters is interesting.

b) Captain Morgan - Hard Liquor, Hard Men

Within this sample of ads, men were often imaged in ways which were similar to how females bodies have been imaged. Sexy poses, bedroom eyes, and partially or completely naked males are a few examples of this. Although many of these sexy representations of males showed the male body as feminized, they were not delegated to the grotesque or the comical. The males succeeded in being sexy. However, this was not always the case. Acceptable images of males were dependent on contingencies. In one instance the depiction may be sexy, in another, it is humorous or cheesy. As well, *both* of these reactions (sexy or cheesy) could come from the same image, depending on the reader. In effect, imaging the male body in sexy poses works sometimes but not others.

> So strong is this cultural regime of looking that it resists simple subversion. Attempts to attack it by reversing images don't seem to come off, as some experiments have shown. If a man is posed, lit and photographed in the same kind

> of way as the Monroe Calendar, the result is often comic, or grotesque, or reveals an attractive femininity in the male image (Easthope 1990: 137).

Sexiness then becomes wrapped up within certain investments of 'manliness'. In turn, male bodily markers of attractiveness or sexiness can mean different things in different contexts. Take for example the two ads figured below. Both ads picture a young dark haired male in almost exactly the same physical position (i.e., legs open, facing camera, seducing stare, etc). The cologne ad for Lagerfeld Jako, (Maxim, July and August 1999) gives the reader the feeling that it is acceptable for this male to be positioning himself, quite literally, as a sexy subject. This ad then succeeds in this way. When we compare this with an ad for Captain Morgan rum (Maxim March 1999), almost the exact same image becomes configured in a very different manner by way of the 'drawn' on moustache (presumably drawn by Captain Morgan). This pretty boy fails. The male is being made fun of for the very same thing that worked in the previous representation. This visual and figurative mocking of the sexy male subject (done behind his but not the reader's back), tells a story about how 'real men' do not act this way. Male behavior such as this then deserves to be mocked. It becomes funny to the viewer that men are pictured in this way. Captain Morgan, the referent for pure patriotic, hegemonic, patriarchal traditional Masculinity does not approve. He finds reason to mock, and so must the reader. The Captain is a pirate in more ways than one. Pirates take things over, they rape and pillage, conquer and claim. Here, this pirate is taking over not physical, but mental and cultural space. He is declaring Masculinity as something more rigid, more strict, and ultimately more serious than the message the image of the male without the drawn on mocking moustache sends. The pirate then polices cultural terrain and masculine territorial boundaries.

Two other ads for Captain Morgan rum tell the same intertextualized story. The reader sees one ad, and can then relate it back to others they have previously seen. The 'fake' product (the fakeness of the product goes to the fakeness of this male as a Man. He

Maxim, July and August, 1999. This ad pictures a young tanned white male, smirking at the camera. He has dark hair. He is wearing only pants, and his shirtless torso appears to be strong and toned. He is posing for the camera, sitting down with one arm draped over on of his knees which is raised. The background is yellowish. The ad is for Lagerfeld Jako cologne, the 'New fragrance for men'. One the bottom of the ad is a list of places to buy the product.

Maxim, March 1999. This ad is for Captain Morgan rum. The ad is in black and white, except for an image of Captain Morgan himself, and some of the text of the ad which reads, 'The Captain was here'. The Captain enters the ad from the right hand top corner of the page. He seems to be tearing the page. The Captain has drawn a moustache on the male who is also imaged in the ad. This male is imaged in black and white. He is white, young and buffed. He has dark hair. He is staring at the reader of the ad. He is posing for the camera, lying down in a sexy position. He is wearing only underwear. This fake product of this ad is for Geoffrey Moore underwear. The 'real' product of the ad is rum.

is not a real man just as the product is not a real product) is classic khakis, a brand which does not exist. The ad (Maxím, September 1999) shows a young clothed man, smiling at the camera. Behind him are a group of coed individuals, all laughing and having fun. However, Captain Morgan creeps into the ad from the top right hand corner, and informs the reader that this is not what 'real men' do. He paints a moustache on the center male's face, and has a chuckle to himself in the process. He has effectively 'raped' this male of his Masculinity. He has revealed him as a fraud. The subject is merely pretending to be a 'real' man. Captain Morgan redirects the masculine message back to 'M'asculinity through the use of hard liquor. Again, the product is largely responsible for this redirection. The preferred type of masculinity (hard and 'real' traditional Masculinity) is then related to the product being sold (hard liquor).

The second ad (Maxim, September 1998) is for the fake brand Silverline eyewear, and pictures a young male who is wearing the 'fake product'. Again, the Captain is seen protruding onto the scene, tearing the page, and painting on his trademark moustache. (The painting of the moustache is a way in which to make fun of the subject pictured. I remember doing this, when I was young, to people in my yearbook.) This ad is especially interesting when we look at other ads which actually *do* picture males in this position, especially for sunglasses or eyeglasses. Take for example the following ad for Hugo Boss eyewear (Details, July 1999), which pictures one lone male in almost the exact the same position as the male in the 'fake' Silverline ad.

Again, these males are being made fun of due to their inability to act according to 'real' (as opposed to fake) Masculine rules. The joke is on them, and Captain Morgan has successfully called them on their charade. The 'fakeness' of the products (in that they do not 'exist' as 'real' products) becomes contrasted with the fact that these men are NOT acting like 'real men'. They are merely acting like real men and Captain Morgan has called them on their charade.

Maxim, September 1999. This ad is for Captain Morgan Rum. The ad shows five people standing around on the beach. They are smiling and having fun. The main male in the image is laughing, and looking at the camera. He has tanned skin, and short dark hair. The captain is again tearing the page of the ad, and has painted a moustache on this main male. The fake product in the ad is called P. Carp Classic Khakis.

Maxim September 1998. Again, the captain is tearing the page of the ad. A single male is imaged in the frame, who is modeling sunglasses (Silverline eyewear). The male is shown in a shiny silver type print. He has longer blonde hair. Only his face is shown in the image. The Captain has once again painted a moustache on his face.

Details, July 1999. This ad is for Hugo Boss, and shows a male's face. The ad is in black and white. He is not looking at the camera, and has sunglasses on his face. He is white, and has brown hair.

Masculinity is highly constrained and compartmentalized according to these masculinized boundaries. Arguably, while women hold a certain degree of 'freedom' in that there are numerous ways to be an attractive woman, there are perhaps (arguably) fewer ways in which males can successfully be (or appear) masculine, (at least as far as Captain Morgan would have us think). To 'be a man' requires the subject to follow certain rigid codes of conduct. To break such codes, or to give an unconvincing performance (one which lacks 'Male authenticity') is to fail.

c) Remasculinizing Othered Male bodies

When we do see popular images of male bodies which do not seem to fit the 'mold' of masculinity, it gives us an opportunity to examine the boundaries of the mold. From images which project what the male body is *not*, (or what the male body *should* not be), we see what the white male body *is* (or should traditionally be). Take for example the following set of images.

The first of this set is an image of a rather hefty Asian male ballet 'dancer' dancing in a studio. He is pictured as being light and graceful, seemingly hanging within mid air despite his obvious girth and heavy weight. The text reads 'Discover the rewards of thinking light'. This is an ad for Merit Ultra Light cigarettes (Maxim, July and August 1999). The meaning the reader takes from the dancing Asian male is complex, as the image draws on Sumo wrestling, usually associated with power and sexiness in a traditional Japanese frame of reference. If the reader was not aware of Sumo wrestling culture, the reading would be very different. He would have less status or privilege, and would be reduced to a fat Asian male ballet dancer. He would not meet the standards of 'white boy' perfection (he is fat, wearing frilly ballerina garb). However, because the reader can bring into the reader an understanding of Sumo culture, he characterized as being a successful male in a different context. This is important to note, as it exemplifies how one marker of masculinity does not retain the same meanings when we move it

Maxim, July and August 1999. This ad images a rather hefty Asian male dancing in a dance studio. The sun is setting, and an orange glow is coming in through the windows. He is in mid air. He is wearing tight black underwear with tassels coming off of them. He has pink ballet shoes on. The ad is for Merit Light cigarettes. The text reads 'Discover the rewards of thinking light'.

along, or place it within different contexts. Others are not necessarily other in *all* contexts.

In terms of bodies themselves, much can be said about the fact that this man is fat: Men are not supposed to be 'fat'. Fat does not mean strong. It connotes laziness, carelessness - things which real men should not be. Men are supposed to be hard, ripped, toned, strong, muscular. Fat in our culture means a lot of things, none of which are associated with traditional white boy masculinity. However, the reader knows that this is a male body, and a fat male body. Part of the depth of this ad comes to the reader implicitly, in that the girth of this male informs the reader about what is, and what is not, 'male'. Marcia Ian notes that

> [m]ale bodybuilders are supposed to emulate or concretize mythical models such as Zeus, Hercules, Arnold, or Apollon(?!), while women are supposed to incarnate a far more elusive abstraction: femininity. Femininity, equated here with "shape", might seem like a vacuous Platonic tautology, a category without content, except that in this case the "content" implied by "shape" is cushy body fat - and space, space for the phallus (in an edited book by Sanders, 1996: 194).

Having a shape then, or being fat, becomes conceived of in terms of the phallus positive, in that to possess the phallus one must not be able to *receive* the phallus; one must not be penetrable. As Bordo (1994) notes, "So far, the transformation has chiefly gone in the direction of permitting (and even eroticizing) *hardness* in women, but never softness in men (Goldstein 1994: 292). Here, we see further proof of the traditional masculine connections between being or having a male body and being hard and impenetrable. Being soft means *not* being male. This point is further illustrated by Ian when she says that "[for] a man to be penetrated, to have an interior, is to be a "woman""(Ian, in an edited book by Sanders 1996: 197).

However, having a hard, huge muscled body is also a form of 'muscle head' masculinity which is other. In effect, a male who body builds is going against the supposed invisibility of male bodies. Body-builders in effect become their bodies, which is not traditionally masculine. However, and paradoxically, these men are considered on other levels to be 'pure men', all beef and strength. Take for example the following ad for milk (Maxim, July and August, 1999). It images a wrestler (Stone Cold Austin), who is big, bulky, and not wearing a shirt. The text of the ads reads, "Milk has nutrients active bodies need, and protein for butt-whoopin' muscles. So make sure it's icy. 'Cause Stone Cold said so." This text suggests that although this male *becomes* his body what is important is not a focus on the body per se, but rather a focus on what the body can *do* and what the body could make other people do. It's not the muscles, but the "butt-whoopin'" that the muscles can accomplish. Although the sumo wrestler also wrestles, we have two very different bodies. One fat, one hypermasculine. Both highlight the male body, and both are other to a certain type of dominant masculinity. Muscle head masculinity is redirected towards something which is acceptable for a Masculine male as the muscle-head does not pay attention to his body for girly aesthetic reasons, but rather for what he can *accomplish through* the attention he pays to his body. Both of these men are other to an aesthetic sexy type of male imaging. And both have attributes which must be re-routed in order to reMasculinize these men (e.g., Sumo prestige, hypermasculine muscles).

Another representation of a fat male backs up how something in the ad works to remasculinize the male. An article on Drew Carey (a comedian) pictures Carey sitting in a tub full of bubbles and beer bottles, pouring beer over his fat and hairy chest (Maxim, September 1999). However, the fact that Carey is a funny male, and one who is successful may somehow make up for the fact that he is fat, and not aesthetically pleasing. A quote placed in the right hand side of the ad furthers the notion that this man can be said to be a 'man' (and worthy of depiction) despite his fat untoned body. The text reads 'Yeah, I think about getting married. I also think about killing people on the freeway'. By associating marriage with something that is both negative and unlikely, Carey succeeds in bringing out what is traditionally expected from a 'real Man'. Real men

Maxim, July and August 1999. Stone Cold Steve Austin is the subject of this ad. He is pictured wearing only pants. His shirt is off. He is totally hairless, except for his goatee and moustache (both real and milk). He is not smiling. He is holding two glasses of milk. The ad is for milk. The text reads 'It better be ICE COLD for STONE COLD'.

Maxim, September 1999. This image is a picture accompanying an article on Drew Carey. He is shown soaking his body in a bathtub. The bathtub is filled with beer, and he is pouring beer onto his body. His mouth is open, in a 'fake' sexy manner. He is white, not very toned, and quite hairy.

don't necessarily think about or want to get married. In effect, the image and text works by showing that Carey, despite his fat body, is ***not penetrable***. Here, being fat does not equal being 'woman'. Other markers exist (beer, humor, manly man quote) which serve to re-masculinize this male despite his unappealing aesthetics. He becomes worthy of being imaged based not on his looks, but by his manly words and supposed manly behaviors.

d) Justifications for a Japanese/Asian Aesthetic

Recently, articles have appeared both in newspapers (Globe and Mail, Edmonton Journal) and on the internet (see URL listed below) which tell the story of how Japanese males are becoming aesthetic subjects. In an article titled, "Japan's 'beauty men' prefer manicures and makeup to macho" (Globe and Mail, August 03, 1999 : A11), the author Yvonne Chang, explains how the males of Japan are increasingly going to professionals in order to (however not for the sole purpose of) improving their physical appearances. Although these men are undergoing facials (to produce 'eggshell smooth skin'), eyebrow tweezing and other hair removal practices, manicures, pedicures, wardrobe transformations and wearing/purchasing beauty cosmetics, their actions are being chalked up to reasons other than those which would be offered up if the subjects seeking the (beauty) makeovers were female. Females do these things to be beautiful. Men do these things not for beauty, but for some *other* reason (at least according to beauty rhetoric). Beauty becomes irrelevant. Other justifications which better align with the Masculine are offered within ads which helps to gloss over the aesthetic investment or intent.

One of these justifications for Japanese male aesthetic maintenance is tied to traditional Japanese culture and a strong emphasis on cleanliness. These men are then performing acts which make them more 'clean', and not more 'beautiful'. To quote Chang, "The concept of beauty here calls not for macho masculinity, but a ***clean look***" (p. A11 emphasis added). As well,

> Japanese young adults are the children of the baby boomer generation, in which the father works long hours and the mother is often left to run the household

> alone. "As a result, the mother's influence on the children is strong and cleanliness has become a virtue for them," Mr. Kuwabara said (p. A11).

We see here that male aesthetic investment is justified in that it is not attributable to men *themselves*, but to the *social*; the child rearing practices of Japanese mothers while the fathers are out bringing home the bacon.

> Kazuhiko Kuwabara, senior manager at the research and development division of Dentsu, which conducted the survey, said the shift was not exactly "feminine," but did show the influence of mother's on young men's tastes for neatness (p. A11).

We can take two things from this quote. The first is that it is not the 'fault' of young men for their interests, but rather we are to blame their mothers. Secondly, these young men's 'tastes for neatness' in no way resemble what they would be if these young men were indeed young women. Their actions are linguistically divorced from being anything which connotes beauty or attention to physical looks for the *sake* of one's looks. It becomes *neatness* and not *beauty*.

Another article found on the internet features a similar message. The article is titled "Tokyo tour agency offers 'Beauty Boy Transformation'" (July 16th, 1999http://cnn.com:80/TRAVEL/NEWS/9907/16/japan.beauty.boys.reut/index.html). Part of this article reads, 'Mori chuckles at his new casual outfit, but says he came out *feeling a new man* - changed from the inside and outside' (emphasis added). Here, male attention to looks becomes *manly*. This is remarkable in that the very definition of what it means to *be a man* is not supposed to include beautifying acts and investments. Of course, this contradiction is partly smoothed over by the constant and direct referents to the blaming of the mother for male interests in vanity and the redefinition of that which is 'beautiful' into that which is 'clean'.

In addition to Japanese bodies and looks being othered in the above ways, Asian-looking males are imaged as having androgynous bodies. Within the following ad for a Calvin Klein CK One fragrance (Cosmopolitan, May 1997), an Asian male is shown wearing only pants. His body is thin, and small. (A semi dark skinned othered female is

Cosmopolitan, May 1997. This ad is for Calvin Klein CK one fragrance. The background of the image is white. The two people pictured are in black and white. The male is thin and Asian-looking. The female looks like she is a mixture of ethnicities. Both the male and the female are the same height. The male is wearing only pants, exposing his thin, small and hairless torso. His fingers are placed so that it appears as if he is going to stick his hands down his pants.

also pictured.) Both of the subjects in this image do not follow or adhere to traditional markers of masculinity or femininity. The text of the ad reads "a fragrance for a man or a woman". The 'fragrance' (not a masculinized 'cologne' or a feminized 'perfume') can be used by *either* a man or a woman, as the text of the ad states. In effect, this ad succeeds in blurring the boundaries between male and female. The images selected for the ad and its message were done so carefully. If the ad imaged a big, muscled, white, tanned, hairy 'man', the text of the ad would not make sense in the same way. The fragrance would not be for a man OR a woman. A small, scrawny, Asian male is shown (a type of masculinity which has already been othered as we have seen above) makes the disconnection between male and female easier to swallow for the reader. Male and female become blurred because this Asian male is in some ways not a 'real' man.

e) Othering White Male Attention to General Aesthetic Interest

Much like the justifications given for Japanese aesthetic investment, white male aesthetic investment is justified within the ads. Many of the ads were for male beauty products. However, beauty was (through the texts and images) downplayed. The relationship between white men and male beauty is explained away. For example, explanations were offered up which delegated male aesthetic interest to a function of simple human (huMan) 'evolution'. In doing so, individual males are exempt from having to admit an *aesthetic* investment. An article by the Associated Press in the Edmonton Journal (July, 1999) titled "Masculine Appeal - Why it's all about time and face" admits that males *are* indeed aesthetically invested. However, this was based not on *social* (like the Japanese men influenced by their mothers clean and neat ideals), but rather on *evolutionary* rationales and causes. Take for example the following excerpt of the article.

> The researchers said they believe this [that the kind of mate a woman is attracted to is related to her menstrual cycle] is not a matter of fashion or a 20th century standard of beauty, *but something that is instilled by evolution for sound biological reasons: In the animal kingdom, masculine looks denote virility, and thus the ability to produce healthy offspring (emphasis added).*

This serves to highlight how *evolutionary* logic is used to explain *social* and *cultural* phenomenon. Here we have a paradox wherein male aesthetic investment (a practice devoted to the body which comes from the social) is being excused *because* of their bodies. Genes, hormones, etc, housed in male bodies (and in female bodies) are to 'blame' for male attention to their own aesthetics.

Another article titled "The Lure of the Body Image" by Susan McClelland (Maclean's Magazine, February 22, 1999) also appeals to evolutionary logic to explain away male attention to their own looks. Again, social explanatory logic is left out of the equation. Within one of the article pieces or fragments, it is noted that men are Masculine because of evolution, in that men had to hunt and be rough and tumble in order to secure food for themselves and others.

The reasoning within the ads is that IF men indeed are aesthetically invested, it is not without a good, explainable, justifiable, quantifiable reason for that aesthetic investment or interest. The moment male attention to their own looks becomes so justifiable and explainable in the above way suggests that we should look closely for alternative 'explanations' or narratives about male aesthetic investment. Why are we so unwilling to buy into the notion that men may be interested in their own looks simply *because of an interest in their own looks and nothing more*? Why is it that men cannot indulge in the same way as females have been 'allowed' to in their own vanity? What exists to promote or maintain such horror or revulsion in the fact that men may be subject to the same narcissistic vanities as traditional women? Perhaps this is because beauty and aesthetic narcissism have solely been located within a traditionally female realm. To see evidence that 'Men' are behaving in such narcissistic ways equates them with being Feminine. Being a male, and attending to one's own vanities seems incompatible, and, to a certain extent, unthinkable.

Because of this seeming incompatibility between males and beauty, non-narcissistic and non-vain rationales for male aesthetic invested takes form within current visual images and ads. For instance, *health* is invoked to sell the products instead of *beauty*. It is a healthy 'look'. Beauty is sold under the guise of this healthy 'look'. The alignment of male aesthetic interest with that of health and NOT beauty maintains the distance between men and femininity.

The following example for Polo sport face products for males (GQ, May 1999) shows us how male interest in their appearance is aligned with male physical prowess, male bodily power and strength. The two page ad features a toned, strong looking young black man on the right side of the ad. He is facing the camera, but his head is angled so that he does not look at the viewer. He appears to be strong, and physically fit. The left side of the ad features four face products geared towards males. These include 'shave fitness, eye fitness, face fitness, and scrub face wash'. These products are not for the faint of heart. They ooze fitness and physical strength, although their function is really about an aesthetic. The main text of the ad reads, 'All it takes is basic training'. The bottom text reads, 'The Men's skin fitness line by Ralph Lauren'. Implying that an attention to aesthetics for males is 'basic training' is ironic in that Masculinity does not include attention to beautiful appearances. Accordingly, these beauty products are directly linked to physically fit, strong looking males – not beautiful males. Males are then allowed to care about their appearance, as beauty has been changed into 'fitness'. We see a defeminization of what has in the past been feminine or female terrain. Once female products are reformulated through imagery and text, 'training' males that they can (and should) participate in the cosmetics industry. The stigma once attached to males using female products has been reconfigured: there is less stigma attached to using beauty products for males once they have been Masculinized.

Another example of this is from an ad for Aveda beauty products (Men's Health, December 1998). It also shows a split image where four products are pictured on the left of the image. The products are being covered in water. All of the products have the word 'Men' printed on them. The right side of the image shows a male, also being drenched in

GQ, May 1999. This ad is a two page layout. On the right hand side of the ad, various male beauty products are pictured such as shave fitness, scrub face wash, face fitness, and eye fitness. One the right hand side of the ad is an image of a strong male. His skin is chocolate brown. He is not smiling, and is not looking at the camera. He is hairless, and toned. He is not wearing a shirt. The reader can see his naked upper body and his head.

Men's Health, December 1999. This ad for Aveda shows a number of men's skin care products to the left of the ad frame. On the right a white male is pictured showering. His eyes are closed, and water is running off of his head and body. The pictures are in color. The main text in red reads 'Exercise Intelligence'.

water. His head and torso are shown, and he is naked. His eyes are closed. The text of the ad reads:

> Exercise intelligence. Think *Healthy*? Think about your products. *Choose* plant-derived, great feeling products that *work. Smarter.* With an energizing aroma that *isn't stronger than you.* Aveda *Men* (emphasis added).

The usage of this particular text is telling of the predicament males are in when it comes to their own aesthetics. Although all of the products are essentially 'beauty' products, the products have been somehow transformed into something *Other* than beauty through the use of rhetorical text. They are now something which 'smart' men, not narcissistic men, '*choose*' to use and purchase. The products are 'strong' according to the text - girly feminine men would not use and/or purchase these products. They become a matter of 'health' rather than beauty. And they 'work', enabling a subtle reference to males as the breadwinner. All of these words work to make something which is not characteristically traditionally male something that is acceptable for real men to use. The fact that the ad makes reference to these words and concepts enables the products to take on new meanings. The old are placed "under erasure" (Hall 1996: 1) in that the usage of these products comes to mean something different for males, something acceptable and even encouraged in males (e.g., being strong and fit). The meanings are redirected into the realm of the masculine. This is done by combining what was acceptable for real men to do and be (working, healthy, strong, smart, natural) in with something that was not acceptable for real men to do and be (stupid, unhealthy, weak, unnatural, and a bad provider).

It is interesting that the notions of cleanliness are brought into the text of this ad. The following piece of text illustrates this:

> Aveda Men isn't packed with unnecessary dyes. Heavy with cologne. Or oily with petrochemical ingredients. It's *clean* plant-derived grooming. And it's in Concept Salons and Environmental Lifestyle stores (emphasis added).

Although this text may very well appear on female Aveda beauty products as well, this reference to being clean is especially interesting given what we saw within the Japanese male section, wherein notions of beauty were delegated to being issues concerning cleanliness and neatness. Here, the product becomes something clean and natural (thereby healthy) and therefore acceptable for males to use. Beauty and aesthetics as rationales become factored out as reasons for the usage of the product. It becomes a matter of clean grooming. Beauty is rendered as non-existent to this equation.

Another product shows us how something once feminine becomes masculinized. The ad is for pore cleansing strips by Nivea (FHM, November, 1999). The ad pictures a young male smirking at the camera with one of the strips over the bridge of his nose. The text reads 'Yes, they look daft. But they get the job done'. Again, the usage of a product which beautifies becomes linked to work, something which has to be done. The text at the bottom of the ad reads 'Nivea for men who dare to care'. This is telling as it reveals that it is indeed daring for males to care about their looks. Men are not supposed to care. This is partly renegotiated by the beauty regime being made into a task, or a job. Stigma is then removed from a once 'daring' behavior in that it becomes work. Again, the beauty product becomes not for beauty, but a task for males who are daring. This serves to realign a Feminine product and beauty goal with that which is traditionally Masculine.

FHM, November 1999. This ad for Nivea Pore strips shows a male's head. His shoulders are also showing, and he is not wearing a shirt. He is smirking at the camera, and has a pore cleansing strip on the bridge of his nose. He is white, his hair is brown, and his eyes are blue. The background is various shades of blue. At the bottom of the ad the product is shown in a box. The product also shows two men with pore strips on their nose, chin, and forehead. The main text reads, 'Yes, they look daft. But they get the job done'. Five comic strip like instructions are on the left hand side of the ad. The text on the bottom of the ad reads, 'Nivea for men who dare to care'.

f) Men's Hair, Men's Selves

Many males are concerned about going bald. Hair loss is not an entirely aesthetic issue. Hair is a sign of virility, youth, and strength (Samson). But the way ads target the problem is a comment on how hair and hair loss come to mean certain things about being a man. The loss of hair signifies and connotes certain things as well (becoming old, less virile, weak). But what is denoted, what we actually see, is the bald head. This makes hair loss about appearances as well. This section will be broken down into two sections, men who are losing their hair, and men who use their full heads of hair as masculine objects. Both show how masculinity is tied to head hair or lack of it.

(i) Male balding

Masculinity itself becomes tied to the *fight* against hair loss. Ads which deal with male balding use imagery, personalities, and text which suggests fighting, struggle, contestation, and working against hair loss. These traits fall well within the domain of traditional masculinity. The fight against hair loss becomes constructed as a 'real' battle - a battle against time, hair loss, aging, and becoming less of a 'real' man. An Extra Strength Rogaine ad (Maxim, March 1999) pictures John McEnroe, a professional tennis player known for his aggressive, mouthy playing style, staring intently at the camera and the reader. The main text reads ‘Did I make a comeback? You tell me’. Right under his head, another image has been superimposed, a photo of the back of John's head dated November 1998. Another back head shot is at the bottom which reads May 1997, showing John again with significantly less hair. The reader is left to assume that, yes, John did 'make a comeback'. Judging from the 'before and after' photos which are pasted into the frame of the ad, his hair *has* grown back, signifying the 'comeback' of his hair. John is a successful tennis player, so the caption reading 'Did I make a comeback?' also applies to the sport of tennis. The text 'Did I make a comeback? You tell me' (signifying both sport and hair regrowth) and images (before and after photos) work together on

Maxim, March 1999. This ad is for Rogaine extra strength for men. The ad features John McEnroe. He is staring at the reader and is holding up a picture of the back of his head before treatment. The product is featured at the bottom of the ad.

many different levels. This is due to the fact that the reader is able to locate or relate the messages being offered within the ad to a greater web of metaphorical intertextual understanding of both sports and McEnroe himself as a certain *type* of tennis player. He fights baldness, and all that becomes associated with baldness and in doing so becomes a man again.

McEnroe is an *aggressive* player of sports. Much like he 'tackles' his opponents, he also successfully '*tackled*' his balding problem. He is competent. He is not smiling. Rather, he is seemingly confronting the camera and the reader of the ad. He looks as if he is ready for a fight or confrontation. The smaller font text reads and tells much the same story as does the image (illustrating the relationship between the language and image within ads), using language which illuminates this successful, aggressive nature of John McEnroe as well as the aggressive nature which seemingly should be employed by those who have a hair loss problem.

> *He hated* that bald spot. *He yelled* at it. *He threatened* it. But for once, John McEnroe had met an *adversary* he couldn't *intimidate*. Until he *attacked* it with Rogaine *Extra Strength* for men. *Look*. That is one very *strong return* (emphasis added).

The language used is not accidental, especially in relation to the images of the ad and the actual person chosen to be pictured in the ad. McEnroe is a person whose reputation for being an aggressive, mouthy tennis player precedes him or his image in many ways. He is a masculine, 'man's man'. If the ad had pictured someone less famous for their aggressive reputation, the ad would not make sense in the ways it does. For example, imagine if Brian Boitano or another male figure skater was pictured with the same text. The reader knows that he (or most male figure skaters) are not usually known for their aggressive personalities. The reading would not work in the ways that it does. We use what is included into the ad, as well as what is left out of the ad to derive an intertextual, multivalent meaning.

Hair loss presumably cannot be solved by employing weak troops, or in this case, a 'weaker bargain' inherent to other hair loss fighter brands.

> One caution though: Don't get sidetracked by weaker bargain brands. They're not nearly as effective. Only Rogaine Extra Strength is Proven to grow more hair, thicker hair and grow it faster than any bargain brand.

Rogaine Extra Strength is the master warrior. No others will do. This ad shows how tightly the rhetoric surrounding *fighting* hair loss is equated with an actual *battle*. It takes a 'real man' to fight hair loss. However, a 'real man' who is suffering from hair loss needs help from 'Extra Strength' Rogaine. After all, he *is* losing the battle on his own. He needs the most powerful product on his side. This, in turn, makes him into a 'man' again. In this way, Rogaine is renegotiating a type of masculinity through the fight against hair loss. The logic goes something like this; man with hair equates to Masculine, a real man. A man losing hair is connected with that which is weak, he is not a real man as he can't fight the war successfully. A male losing his hair but fighting it with this product then becomes a 'winner' of Masculinity and malehood. The logic of the traditionally masculine speaks loudly. The *irony* comes in when one considers that this *fight* is about *appearance*, a terrain which is not traditionally a component of masculinity. But the way in which this ad tells its story allows the reader to forget this. Again, the purpose behind using the product becomes redirected into the realm of the traditionally masculine by using a traditionally male frame (i.e., through aggression, attacking) of reference. An aesthetic problem then becomes situated in a hypermasculine frame, somehow enabling the inconsistency of the message to remain hidden. In effect, the reading of an aesthetic problem (bald head) becomes redirected as hypermasculine. It now becomes *not* about male aesthetics or beauty or appearance, but about winning the fight. And throughout all of the rhetoric surrounding attacking, adversaries, battling, the purposeful use of the image of a nasty well-known professional tennis player, strong returns, hate and threat, men can seemingly forget about the real bottom line: that they are going bald which is *seen* by some as being socially unattractive, a sign of aging, declining virility, and weakness.

However, going bald and choosing to be bald (having a shaved head) are very different. Looking back to the image of Stone Cold Austin (Maxim, July and August 1999), he does not appear to be bald in the sense that he 'lost' his hair. More likely, he seems the type to have shaved his own head bald. He seems to be in control, calling the shots about his 'baldness'. The crucial difference between going bald, and shaving one's head bald, is that in this case being authentically bald carries different meanings than having a simulated bald head. Authentic hair loss represents a very different masculinity than simulated lack of hair. The simulation suggests strength, toughness, while the authentic bald head suggests loss of control, aging, declining virility, weakness. Although it is the same thing essentially, the same sign (baldness), very different masculinized meanings are attached to the authentic and the simulated bald heads.

(ii) Male Head Hair

Full heads of hair must be groomed according to certain male rules. Simply put, having head hair is *not* a reason *not* to worry about one's coif. Males who pay attention to their hair styles (a stereotypically female action) is repositioned as Masculine. For example, the following ads are selling male L'OREAL hair products. They are specifically promoting a product called 'mega style'. The first of the ads (Maxim, July and August 1999) pictures a young, tanned, pretty male. He is clothed. He is the only subject of the frame, alongside the product shot. In effect, he (and his perfectly placed mane) are what the reader of the ad then focuses on. He is grinning. The text of the ads reads, 'Take it to the edge with mega-holding gel. Tames the wild. Tunes up the mild. Shape it. Shine it. Define it'. The text then works in opposing ways to the image of the ads in that the foregrounding of the male subject, his body (and hair), is being paired with words which suggest action and definition; words associated with a more traditional masculinity and that do not highlight the male body. Taking it to the edge, shaping, shining, defining, Maxim, July and August, 1999. This is a two page ad for L'OREAL mega style hair gel. The right side of the ad shows a young tanned white male. He is looking off to the side. He is wearing a yellow and blue shirt. The background is red and yellow. His hair is gelled up James Dean style. His arms are hairless, as is his face and neck. He is wearing pants. The right side of the ad shows the product, and contains the text of the ad.

Jane, May 1998. This ad is for L'OREAL mega gel. The right hand side images a young male, who is white and tanned. He has blue eyes, and is looking at the reader. He is brushing his hair back with both hands. He has a large tattoo under his arm. He is wearing a black shirt. He looks like a rebel. The background is red and yellow. The text, mega gel, is written 'Mega gel'. The emphasis is on the me, which ties into the rest of the text, 'All about mega hold. All about style. All right. It's all about me'. The right hand side features a picture of the product, and most of the text.

taming, wildness, not being mild: all of these things words reinforce the 'James Dean' masculinity of this man.

The same formula is followed within the second L'OREAL ad for the same product (Jane, May 1998). This ad comes to us from a women's magazine, which is important to the reading of the ad. A female audience is doing the looking. Again, the male is the main subject in the frame. Again, he is clothed, tanned, young and pretty. However, within this particular ad, the male has a rather large tattoo, and is pictured in the middle of styling his hair with his hands. These depictions draw on an intertextual metaphor of 'James Dean' masculinity. This appeal includes Brando and the Wild Ones, and draws on conceptions of the 50's loner and rebel without a cause. This reference redirects a feminized reading of the ad (in that a male is using a beauty product) back to the realm of masculine (and an appealing rebel like masculinity).

The ad reads, 'All about mega hold. All about style. All right. It's all about me'. Masculinity could be said to be egocentric. In some ways, masculinity *is* 'all about me'. However, this does not usually include narcissistic aesthetic egoism. Rather, it is what the male subject *does* which makes him worthy within traditional Masculinity. This ad suggests (All right. It's all about me) that being egocentric, narcissistic and aesthetically invested is 'all right'. The 'me' then becomes what the subject *looks like*, and not what the subject is or does that makes him worthy.

The next ad (GQ, May 1999), also from L'OREAL (although for a different product called Feria) features a product which is in itself worthy of mention. Feria is a hair dye for 'guys'. Hair dye has been delegated to the realm of the female for so many years. In the past, only a 'girly' man or a 'fag' would dye his hair. However, L'OREAL seems to be suggesting that this is no longer the case. Feria has ('finally', according to the text of the ad) come to the rescue for men, seemingly solving the problems for men who are sick of their 'boring' hair color. The use of the word 'finally' suggests that men have been able (without stigma) to dye their hair for a long time. The fact that it is now OK for

GQ, May 1999. This ad is for L'OREAL Feria. This is a hair color for men. The ad pictures three males. One has dyed his hair orange. His skin is dark. He is not looking at the camera, and is wearing a black shirt. The next male has blonde hair. He is looking at the reader. He is not smiling, and is wearing a grey shirt and tie. The third male is Asian. He is smiling and looking down. He has a red sweater on. The text reads, 'The end of boring color'. The background is a muted grey.

men to dye their hair may have been made more acceptable by way of the punk rock and new wave movements. Here, dying one's hair became not an aesthetic interest, but rather a comment on social and political interest. As well, numerous male rock stars of today dye their hair without aesthetic stigma or scrutiny. But L'OREAL positions themselves as 'finally' providing a product that everyday males have been wanting. L'OREAL is then filling a need, a space in the market. This serves to place male attention to aesthetics within a realm of social acceptability.

The text of the ad reads 'High impact color Finally, Dyes for Guys Reassured by L'OREAL'. The text of the ad, although the underlying product does not, suggests that men are still 'men'. The dye is for guys. They get 'high impact (reassured) color'. Because men are being depicted as men, special attention is given within the text of the ad to where the product can be purchased. Men do not want to be shopping around looking for (any, let alone a beauty) product. So, the text reassures males that finding this product will be easy. 'You'll find Feria in the haircolor section of your favorite drug, food and mass merchandise stores' - or basically anywhere men would pick up their groceries, towels, or other household products. The location where men can consume this product becomes normalized as being a 'normal' part of male everyday life. We also see the signature L'OREAL text reading 'L'OREAL Paris Because I'm worth it'. Worth what? How did we come from the belief that men did not dye their hair, to suddenly being 'worth' dying their hair? As well, this phrase has been so long associated with women's beauty products from L'OREAL, does it work at all when placed in an ad for a *male* beauty product, given that it is so closely associated with the Feminine? The shift to males being 'worth' beauty attention, although seemingly innocent in the example of the hair dye, suggests something bigger. Perhaps because of consumerism, perhaps because of changing gender and sex expectations and roles, men are now worth providing products to in order to preserve and change appearances. In effect, the *worthiness* of male appearance becomes an important part of an alternative male subjectivity.

When we compare the Feria ad to its female ad equivalent (Images, Fall 1999), we see some important contrasts which serve to highlight the fact that male and female beauty attention is treated differently by advertisers. Stigma could still be attached to males who dye their hair depending on small contextual changes (e.g., a male who dyes his hair to be more attractive, more beautiful – thereby espousing an aesthetic intent and motivation). Males may still be stigmatized for dying their hair when the intent is to *look* better. This theme is important as it illustrates how aesthetic attention is treated differently for men and women. An adherence to traditional male and female expectations is found within the language of the text in the ad. The layout of the ad is virtually the same, with three women pictured much like the three males in the previous ad. However, the text used in the two ads varies greatly, even though the product is identical. (I went to the drugstore to investigate the ingredients of the men's and women's hair dyes. They were exactly the same.) The exact same product becomes specific to either male *or* female consumers through the language used in the text of the ad. The text of the ad for female hair dye reads 'The absolute end of flat color. Introducing Feria Color so multi-faceted, it shimmers'. (The silvery, shimmery, shiny background of the female Feria ad also contrasts with the muted gray background of the male Feria ad.) This text (and use of shimmery background color) would not work as well if it were used within the ad for males. Men may be interested in coloring, or newly 'allowed' to color their hair, but I doubt that they would want it to 'shimmer'. Although males are allowed to care about aesthetics to a certain extent, there is indeed a line of the masculine which should not be crossed. 'High impact color' for males, yes, but shimmering 'Crystal pure colorants' offering 'brilliant diversity', no. These feminized words (used to describe the exact same product) do not fit within the boundaries of traditional 'maleness'. Certain boundaries of Masculinity cannot be squashed or erased when it comes to the acceptance of male aesthetics. Certain boundaries of manhood remain intact.

Images, Fall, 1999. This ad is for L'OREAL Feria for women. This ad features three women. The first is white, and has ruby red hair. She is wearing a red top, is smiling, and is looking at the camera. The next woman has brown hair. She appears to not be wearing a shirt. She is looking at the camera. The next woman is black, and has dyed blonde hair. She is wearing a yellow jacket. She is smiling, and is looking at the camera. The background is shiny silver. The text reads, 'The absolute end of flat color. Introducing Feria color so multi-faceted, it shimmers. The products contains 'crystal pure colorants'.

Being 'worthy' of looking good also gets portrayed as being something 'men of worth' take part in. The following ad (Calgary Herald, December 18, 1998) shows a male looking in his closet, presumably at what clothes he will put on. He is wearing nothing but his underwear. The text of the ad reads, 'Nothing to Wear? MacLeod Bros. Semi Annual Clearance sale is now on. Savings on all sport coats, and dress pants'. This male, pictured as obviously caring about his appearance and what he will be wearing, can 'afford' to do this and still be seen as a Man. This is because this man is supposedly a business man. They are supposed to look professional, and clothes play a role in looking the part. This goes to show that certain males can display an aesthetic interest and get away with it as long as they have other ways to prove their manhood. Success in the 'business world' is one such way. This message also emanates from the location of the ad itself. The ad is centered amidst (literally plastered over) a page within the stocks and bonds section of the newspaper. Hence, the image of a male being attentive to looks becomes legitimated by the fact that he has money to burn. He can successfully play the market to his advantage. He already is a success. In effect, the attention to aesthetics and sense of worthiness becomes re-legitimated within a traditionally Masculine narrative of success and performance.

Calgary Herald, December 18, 1998. This ad is placed in the middle of the stocks and bonds section of the newspaper. A male is shown looking through his closet . He is wearing only his underwear. He is looking through a closet full of suits. The male is young, toned and white.

g) Same Signs, Different Message - The Impossible Task of Pinning Down Meaning

Within media images, there are numerous examples of how virtually the same subject, event, body part, body, text can be pictured or imaged in ways which alter and inversely transform the message of an image (take for example the Feria ad - same product, two different narratives and, the bald head – real vs. shaved simulation). This makes representations of the male body (or any body for that matter) even more fluid and inconsistent. Take for example the following two images of full male bodies standing with their backs to the camera. In the first image (Maxim July and August, 1999), we have a naked, tanned, hairy, excessively tattooed male. He is solid and carries large muscles all over his body. He is seemingly unmoving and fixed. The text at the bottom of the image reads 'Absolut Restraint'. Although this man is restrained, (according to the text), the restraint comes from within the subject, as the only part of his body which did not fall prey to cultural inking takes the form of a vodka bottle, the product of the ad. Restraint, control, solid maleness, and hard liquor then all bleed into each other, offering the reader of the image a message which ties together all of said cultural symbols into that which IS manliness. Note that the linkage of these things to that which is male is a 'solid' example of the social creation of maleness, whereby things are attached to masculinity for no 'real' reason. There is nothing inherent about hard liquor and being male. But culture informs us that hard men drink hard liquor and have tattoos.

This tattooed man is a visual metaphor or reference to the "Illustrated Man" (movie and book) who only had one spot on his body which was tattoo free. This 'clear' spot on his body was where he could see his 'true self'. Here, Absolut (a hard liquor) is the clear spot where presumably this man can see his true self, and his true masculine form. The clear spot tells us that Real men drink hard liquor. This reference also works well now with the trend of body art, and the connections this has to seeming openness to diverse cultures and ways of life.

Maxim, July and August, 1999. The ad is for vodka. The text reads 'Absolut restraint'. A naked male is pictured from behind. His body is covered in colorful tattoos. His hand is resting on his left buttock. He has short dark hair. He has hair on his arms, and dark skin. On the middle of his back is a spot where he has not been tattooed. It is in the shape of a liquor bottle. The background of the ad is bluish grey. The male is the only subject in the image.

The Face, February 1999, pg. 80. This is a portion of a fashion layout. A male is pictured with his back to the reader. He is thin, has red hair and very white skin. This male has no muscle definition. If anything, he looks flabby. He has a red shrug draped over his shoulders. The red ties of the shrug are coming down around his arms, and the rest of his body. He has on loose fitting pants.

The other image (The Face, February 1999, pg. 80), demands a very different reading although the imaging of the male body is similar. This clothing ad, part of a sequence within a fashion layout, depicts a male wearing a red shrug, with the ties of the shrug draped whimsically over and around his body. He too shows a 'true spot' free of clothing. However, this spot does not allow for true manliness. He is wearing feminine attire. He is pale, thin, and shows little to no muscle definition. He has red head hair, and no body hair. This male, does not exude the manliness of the first image. He does not hold or have any of the markers or signs which connote 'male'. But ***he presumably is*** a male. When placed side by side these two images tell very different stories about what it means to 'be a man'. The message does not exclusively rely on the imaging of the material male body, but rather on the imagined 'realness', the tacit underlying narratives about real men. These things work together to represent a seemingly solid 'man' when in actuality the message takes its form from unstable male referents. The same body or body part (here the back) can mean different things in different contexts.

h) General Uncertainty and Gender Ambiguity

What is or becomes 'male' or 'female' includes a number of gender markers which inform the reader about representations and images within 'real life' and ad culture. These markers are symbols for what is (and has been) traditionally male or female. Some of these markers for what makes up a 'real man' include muscles, body hair, tattoos, rugged clothing, hard liquor, among others. Some female markers include facial and body make-up, flashy, glittery or otherwise non-rugged clothing, no body hair, slenderness, to name a few. Within the ads, these markers are located on the 'wrong' bodies. This creates a feeling of gender uncertainty within the ads. These ads both shock and serve to reinforce the usual predictability of gendered markers. Usually, the 'right' markers are located on the 'right' bodies.

In addition to the content (gendered markers) of the message being characterized by instability, a theme of contextual gender and sexual *ambiguity* takes form. The context of the images and messages are also unstable. Take for example the following advertisements, all of which depict males who (for the most part) could be 'mistaken' for either females or males as far as gender markers (both clothing and bodily markers) are concerned. These markers make the determination of female or male difficult for the reader.

The first image in the collection for Gucci (Vanity Fair, March 1997), shows a male wearing sparkly purplish tight pants, paired with a shirt that is half open revealing a relatively hairless and tanned chest. The male is sitting down, clutching his buttock. His face, although it shows a little more than a five o'clock shadow, is also covered in make-up. His eyes and lips are accentuated by make-up in the same manner as a womans facial features are accentuated. Although this male is a man and depicts certain markers which suggest so (e.g., facial hair), he is also wearing make-up, wearing flashy clothing, and is in a position which suggests passivity. This ad blurs gendered expectations and assumptions in that it uses *both* male and female markers to mess up the determination of *either* male or female.

The next ad for Moschino (The Face, November 1998) shows a male who is shirtless, with his thumb down his pants, holding what at first glance looks like a football. He is smirking at the camera. This description, on its own without the other (feminine) markers in the image, would lend the reader to assume that this male is being depicted as a 'manly' man. However, that same male is wearing a long pearl necklace (a rosary?). This signifies this devilish looking male as being angelic, virtuous, virginal, all things which Men are not supposed to be. (This ad is playing with both notions of religion and gender. It messes up both of these coveted boundaries.) He is relatively without definite muscle form, and is relatively hairless. The 'football', upon closer scrutiny, is in actuality, a purse. All of these sex/gender clues (e.g., the purse, the pearl/religious necklace, smooth thin body, etc) do not mesh with traditionally Masculine markers. Again, markers from

Vanity fair, March 1997. The male in this ad is young and white. He is quite tanned. He is sitting with his back to a cement wall. He is wearing a black shirt, which is unbuttoned and open at the chest. He has sparkly shimmery purple pants on. They are tight. He is clutching his buttock with both hands. His legs are up so that his knees are close to his chest, and his legs are wide open. He is looking away from the camera. This male is wearing eye make-up. This is an ad for Gucci.

The Face, November 1998. The main subject of this ad is a young male. He is white, and has very little body hair. He is pale and thin. He has sporadic hair on his face. He is smirking at the camera. His hair is messy, and a looks a bit grown out. He is not wearing a shirt. He has a long pearl necklace around his neck. There is a cross on the bottom of the necklace. He is holding at what first glance appears to be a football. The football is really a purse. His hand is resting in his pants. The ad is for Moschino, a clothing company. The ad is in black and white. The background is grey.

both traditional masculinity and traditional femininity are used within the image to create an unclear gender juxtaposed message.

The next ad for Guess (Maxim July and August 1999) shows a person who has long head hair, and no body hair. This person has huge 'bee stung' lips, and a completely smooth complexion. The eyes are covered by sunglasses, which allows the reader of the image to 'see' what the subject sees (palm trees, beach). However, the reader of the image (or at least I was) is much more concerned with figuring out if this person is a male or female. In actuality, the reader is offered no 'definite clues' as to this persons gender identity, however, they are somehow able to tell by the whole or total image that the subject within the image is male. (The only exception is his Adam's apple. However, I did not notice this at first. Interestingly, it was pointed out to me by a male friend.) This subject is pictured not with *both* male and female markers, but essentially *neither* (male nor female) gender specific markers (with the exception of the Adams apple). It is outside of androgyny. It is a lack of either male and female. This is interesting as the *inclusion* of *both* male and female markers, or the *exclusion* of both male and female markers, creates confused gender messages.

Other examples of gender ambiguity and androgyny are as follows. Two different ads each picture two people. In one ad for Emporio Armani (The Face, November 1998), one person of the couple pictured is about to kiss or whisper in the other's ear. In the second ad for Cartier (The Face, January 1999), two people are both kissing a ring at the same time, which allows the reader to see the side profile of each of the pictured subjects. Much like the Guess ad, gendered markers seem to be absent. They cannot be used to help the reader ascertain whether or which of the people are male, which are female. All four of the subjects could be characterized as being 'pretty', an adjective which is almost exclusively assigned to the realm of femaleness. Yet, none of the four are characteristically feminine. However, there seem to be clues the reader can draw on in order to figure out which of the subjects 'is' male, and which 'is' female.

Maxim, July and August, 1999. This ad is in black and white. The product name, Guess, is in red. The ad shows a male with long blondish hair. He has a dark colored shirt on, which is open revealing his hairless chest. He has huge lips. He has sunglasses on. The glasses are reflecting palm trees. His arms are reaching up over his head. He has no facial hair, and no body hair.

The Face, November, 1999. This ad shows one person who is about to kiss or whisper in another persons ear. The person to the left has no facial hair. He (I am presuming he is really a he) looks like he is wearing lipstick. The reader can see the profile of his face. The person on the right, presumably a female, has long dark hair. Her eyes are closed. The reader can only see her eye, and a bit of her face. The image is in black and white. The product is Emporio Armani fragrance. The text reads, 'Get together with the two new fragrances…'.

The Face, January, 1999. This ad shows two people kissing a ring at the same time. Both have no facial hair. The profile of each face is shown. The text reads, 'Trinity ring by Walter Chin for Cartier'. Both of the subjects in the image are young and white. Both look as if they are wearing eye shadow.

Because the products are reinforcing heterosexual coupling (wedding rings and his/hers perfumes) the reader assumes one is male and one is female. Because of the usual association of males and females to wedding rings and 'his and hers' perfumes, this forces the reader to produce the subjects as male *and* female. The reader is forced into assuming a heterosexual coupling (and therefore a man and a woman) by way of the product (e.g., wedding rings, his/her perfumes). This culminates in a producerly task of applying a 'gender formula' in order to figure out the sex of the gender unspecific images subjects. A gendered (re)production is required, and in many ways assured. Knowing whether the subject is *either* male or female is too important to be left unanswered. The reader needs (desires) to place the subject as one or the other - not as neither or both.

The final ad within this grouping for hers *and* his D&G perfumes (The Face, February 1999) shows numerous males and females, all naked and contorted lying on the floor. However, the reader must look closely at the bodies in order to figure out who is 'male' and who is 'female'. Each of the fragrance bottles shows a title – one says ‘masculine’, and one says ‘feminine’. Yet, masculine and feminine markers are not imaged on the bodies themselves. For the most part, all of the bodies look very similar. This is in direct opposition to popular sentiment which holds that male and female bodies are characterized by Difference, in every sense of the word. For the purposes of this image, males and females are the same. Breast of both males and females are shown, both surprisingly similar in appearance. Armpit hair is airbrushed out of the image, leaving both the males and the females with silky smooth netherarm regions. There is no leg, chest, or abdomen body hair. Not only does this image highlight (and not hide or ignore as with so many other cultural images) gender ambiguity, but it indeed promotes sameness. This is remarkable in that so much of what becomes defined male or female is accomplished on the basis of excluding the other. Gender markers which once seemed to be so pronounced, so secure in their signified messages and marked meanings (e.g., The Face, February 1999. This ad shows a number of males and females sprawled out. They are all lying down, and are all naked. All are young and white. Their bodies look remarkably similar. There is no body hair. There is a product shot at the bottom right hand side of the ad. Two D&G perfume bottles are shown, one with the word 'feminine' and one with the word 'masculine'. The background is glowing white. The bodies are in color.

hairless underarms as being female) become unraveled. They no longer mean what they once may have meant. The meanings of the sexed and gendered markers have been put under erasure: made to mean different things than they previously were intended to mean. This group of ads goes to show how being a man or a woman may be changing. Gendered markers are not being used 'properly', or are being used in contradictory ways which impacts how we see and negotiate masculinity and femininity. These ads do not teach men to be men by showing Men. If they teach men at all, it is through the negative, by not picturing real men. Notions of Real males and females are still present, although not imaged in the ads. The ads work by placing once given gender markers into and onto the 'wrong' bodies - thereby creating gendered bodily uncertainty and contradiction.

h) Overtly Flirting with the Feminine

Some of the ads flirted with and blurred the notion of carving a masculine identity on the body by using specific markers of the Feminine on male bodies. These Feminine marker(s) stood in stark contrast to the masculinity or masculine markers in the ad. The first of these ads is for JOOP!, (The Face, November 1998, pg. 53), an eau de toilette for homme (man). The fragrance is then for him only, *not* her. The ad pictures a tanned, toned, hairy, naked male torso. He is holding both arms close to his body, and flexing one of his arms up and towards his face, although his face is not pictured. However, on his bicep lies a pink body jewel, something which is (or was) almost exclusively for female bodily decoration. As well, the body jewel is in the shape of a teardrop, further symbolizing a supposed female characteristic: being emotional. This feminine jewel (feminine gender marker), in many ways, becomes the primary object in the ad, as the

The Face, November 1999. This ad is for Joop! Cologne. The ad pictures a male. He is taut and dark. He has body hair on his arms. One of his arms is posed so that his muscles show. His fist is up by his face. The reader cannot see his face. On his bicep is a pink body jewel in the shape of a teardrop. The background is pink. The perfume bottle is pink.

reader struggles to place it in the context of the very masculine (e.g., cologne for him only, muscles, hairy arms, muscle pose) male form in the image. Cognitive dissonance runs high, yet it is this very cognitive dissonance which attracts the reader to the ad. There is a certain shock value in the gender marker displacement. The image becomes both sweet and bitter, in that you cannot help but to look at it, even though you know you should not be so drawn to it. A similar example is when you see a car accident at the side of the road. You know you should not look, but it is hard not to. Gender (or car accidents) should not be so appealing. But collisions (whether in a car or between gender markers) are hard to resist.

The next ad (Maxim, September 1998) for Gucci Envy (also a male only scent) pictures a male lying on his back. He is naked, and the reader can only see his head down to just below his pectoral muscle. His lips are parted, his nipple is somewhat erect, and he is sporting bedroom eyes. They are half closed, and look like they are rolling back in his head. This man is primed and ready in terms of a sexual encounter (or is perhaps even in the middle of a sexual encounter). This image is not commonly seen. If men are pictured in a sexual sense, it is usually as the one who is doing the priming, who is active, and in control. However, here we have the reverse, in that this man is being imaged much like traditional females are (were?) in that he is seemingly sexually available and 'ready'.

These two images tell a story which goes against male anxiety in terms of a supposed male disdain for or fear of anything feminine. The jeweled masculine 'man', and the primed and sexually ready male, suggest that femininity does not have to be a source of anxiety for men. Men can explore their 'feminine sides'. As well, markers of the feminine are being incorporated into referents of 'masculinity', a seemingly impossible task in theory since masculine is defined *against and in opposition to* feminine.

Maxim, September 1998. This ad for Gucci Envy for men (cologne) pictures a young man who is lying on his back. His eyes are mostly closed and he looks like he is having a sexual experience. The image is in black and white. The cologne bottle is in green. His nipple is showing, and is erect. The reader can only see his torso, which is naked. He has very little body hair, is quite young, and white.

In spite of this, males are not *becoming* female. They are still male 'exploring' their feminine 'sides'. Boundaries of man remain intact. Femininity is just visited, not adopted whole heatedly into male. So, flirting with the feminine also *furthers*, not reduces, the distinction between the feminine and the masculine. The following ad exemplifies this. The ad is a fold out ad for premium scotch whisky (Sports Illustrated, Winter 1997). The product of the ad (hard liquor) serves to promote a preferred type of masculinity. When the fold out is folded down, the image is of a beach, with a (presumably) female subject sprawled out enjoying the sun. The reader can only see a pair of feminine looking legs. However, when the ad folds out, senses are shocked and confronted. The ad folds out to reveal *not* the remainder of the female subject, but the trunk and torso of a male. The text reads, 'Either you have it, or you don't'. Presumably, this male/female does not have 'it'. The ad is startling precisely because the gendered ordering of bodies is accosted, deteriorated. However, this deterioration, unlike the ads of the muscular male with the body jewel or the male who is sexually stimulated, works to inform the reader that the (imagined) distinctions between male and female bodies are real and should be preserved. A subject either has *it*, or they do not. Subjects should not be one *and* the other, only one *or* the other. The use of both feminine and masculine markers on male bodies ensures gender ambiguity and instability prevail which both melts and reinforces traditional masculinity. Also of interest here is that these ads exist virtually side by side, on the same intertextual plane.

Sports Illustrated, Winter 1997. This ad shows a woman (presumably) lying on the beach. The reader can only see a pair of female legs. They are long, tanned and hairless. The beach is in the background, and the reader can see water. The image is in color. A bottle of whisky is pictured at the woman's feet. There is a flap which can be pulled out to reveal a portion of the ad hidden by this flap. When the flap is pulled out, the subject turns out to be not a female, but a male with very shapely female legs. He has a hairy chest, hairy face, and curly long hair. He is white, young, and tanned. He is smiling, and wearing sunglasses. It looks as if he is looking at the reader. He is naked except for a small pair of swimming trunks.

j) The Male Underdog

There is not only a more general gender ambiguity or confusion within these following images, but there is also a degree of more specific masculine confusion. So, there is confusion surrounding both how males and females are supposed to be relating to each other, as well as over what it means or how men should act *as men*. Here we see a collection of ads which images males as an underdog, a position not traditionally reserved for males.

One ad of this sort (Vanity Fair, March 1997) for Versace pictures the profile of a fully dressed female. Her head is tilted so that she is engaging the viewer, smiling at them. The male is pictured behind her. He is wearing nothing but pants. He is juggling, or rather trying to make sure 7 dinner plates do not fall to the ground. He is looking up, and looks worried that he may not accomplish his task at hand. He does not engage the viewer. Again, the female seems to have control, is fully dressed, and is laughing (perhaps mocking the male for his lack of ability to 'juggle' societal expectations?). She is engaging the camera and the reader of the image more so than the male who is busy 'juggling' the dinner plates. The reader could take this as a commentary on how males (and females) must 'juggle' gender roles which are dynamic, unstable, fluid, and ambiguous at best.

Another ad for Ralph Lauren swim-wear (Vogue, May 1999) pictures a male and female floating on a water toy. They are both wearing swimsuits and are wet from the water. The male is lying face down, his eyes are closed. The female is lying face up, literally on top of the male. Although her eyes are closed, it is her expression which grasps the attention of the reader. It appears as if she is almost orgasmic from the sun bathing. Again the female, whether she is orgasmic or not, is on top of the male, and engaging the reader of the image in a different way than the male despite the visualization and sexualization of both of their bodies.

Vanity Fair, March 1997. This is a two page ad for Versace home signature. On the left hand side a male juggles plates. he looks worried. The plates are flying through the air. He is wearing only pants. His torso is tanned and taut. He is white and has short brown hair. He is barefoot. On the right hand side a woman is pictured laughing. She is wearing a black evening gown. Her hands are placed so that they are going down the back of her dress, towards her buttock. She is pictured in profile, and her head is turned to look at the camera. She is white, tall, young, and has short blondish hair.

Vogue, May 1999. This two page ad features a male and a female. She is lying on top of the male face up. He is lying face down, on top of an air mattress. They are lying in the water. The male has a white bathing suit on. The female is wearing a white bikini. She has short blonde hair. She looks orgasmic. He is dark and tanned. His hair is dark brown. Both of the subjects have their eyes closed. The image is in black and white. Blue text reads, 'Ralph Lauren Swimwear'.

Maxim, September 1999. This image is in black and white. A young white woman with long dark hair is shown to the left. She is smiling, and looking at the camera. She is wearing a white shirt and dark jeans. The male is pictured behind her. He is wearing only jeans, and his torso is exposed. He is not smiling, but is looking at the camera. He is white, and hairless. He has a toned body. The ad is for Guess clothing.

In another ad for Guess (Maxim, September 1999), a male and a female are pictured standing close together. The female is in front, fully clothed (although part of her stomach is exposed) and smiling. The male is standing behind, not smiling and wearing only jeans. This goes in direct opposition to the old adage, 'Behind every great man, there's a great woman'. Here, it appears that behind a happy woman 'lies' a half naked man. This message may be just as false, and just as dangerous, however, it shows that gender and sexed sentiments are changing. At the very least, they are less static and less 'given' than they have been in the past. And we can say that despite the representation of *both* male and female naked bodies in image culture, gender differences (changing or not) prevail. Masculinity and femininity, male and female, can never be equal because their very definition requires the other to make sense. Here, the images suggest that the male is behind the female. He is not central to the frame or center of the image. He is an underdog.

These ads point to a certain vulnerability in 'real men'. However, this vulnerability is only pictured when females are also pictured within the image. The males may be naked, and more naked than the females, but the fact is that the females are still present within the images. This seems to suggest that a male can only be seen as vulnerable when a female is included in the equation, suggesting a certain heterosexual contingency to the pictured vulnerability. As well, this furthers the notion of a struggle of the sexes. One of them, either male or female, must become lesser, the underdog. This zero-sum game of power and control can be seen within ad images. The fact that 'the sexes', male and female, are pitted against each other in such a manner helps to reinforce and reproduce the imagined and imaged difference between males and females, masculinity and femininity.

The final ad from this collection is (Maxim, July/August 1999) an ad for Camel cigarettes. The ad depicts two males, both naked (all the reader is exposed to is the top half of their bodies), sitting (stewing) in a hot tub like pot. Carrots and celery float among

Maxim, July and August, 1999. This ad is for Camel cigarettes. The image takes place in the jungle. Five women are surrounding two men who are sitting in a huge pot of hot water. Carrots and celery float in the tub with them. One of the woman is pouring water on one of the men's hats. Two women are staring at each other with knowing looks. Two more are featured in the background chopping vegetables. All of the women are scantily clad in tribal looking clothing. All of the people in this image are white. All are fairly young and attractive. One of the males looks as if he is figuring out what is happening, but is not quite sure. He is smoking. Fire is pictured at the bottom of the image, in front of the giant pot. The image is in color, and shows bright green (trees and plants) and yellow (fire) colors.

their naked bodies. A group of five women circle the 'pot', all have secretive grins on their faces. One of the males seems to be enjoying himself immensely, the other seems to be staring at the vegetables floating around in his 'bath'. The reader is to take from the image that the women are preparing the males (as) dinner. This is a brilliant play on gender stereotypes such as how the male waits while the female prepares the family feast. Here, the males *are* the feast.

The text of the ads warns that the ad contains 'Hungry women, hot guys, and man stew'. This combination seemingly produces something which is 'Mighty tasty'. Of course, the 'viewer discretion' and the 'mighty tasty' are a play on the warnings on cigarette packages (exemplifying the multivalent and intertextualized meanings in ads). However, they are also a play on gender and sexed based cultural assumptions. Traditionally, women aren't supposed to be hungry, men are not supposed to be hot (thereby privileging their bodies over other more important male attributes), and of course, men are not supposed to be made into stew. But the ad touches upon something which is apparent yet latent within all of this collection of ads. Regardless of whether or not the point is to be made in relation to female bodies, male bodies are being treated as pieces of meat, here worthy of being stewed. In the other ads, the male body as 'meat' takes on characteristics which are traditionally reserved for the female body: woman as sex object, woman as body, as material, as flesh and not much more. These ads suggest that this locale is no longer reserved for just women. Men are meat as well.

This ad also plays on traditional gender stereotypes which depict women as sexually available, as sexually 'hungry'. In this way, the ad appeals to a cultural male fantasy, that of the female sexual aggressor. As well, the image pictures 5 women after 2 males, also 'feeding' into the male fantasy of 'having' more than one woman at the same time. In effect, by taking and employing such culturally available male fantasies, the ad works on a number of different levels, and at the same time, twists them or tweaks them to make their meanings all the more convoluted. This enables the reader of the ad to take messages from the ad which are at one and the same time meaningful, and meaningless. If nothing else, this ad shows us how very specific gender tropes and metaphors can be employed while at the same time provide the reader with a message which remains unclear and convoluted. For example, if men are being pictured like pieces of meat, like women have been pictured, are we to take from this that men have to be like women in order to be men? Perhaps, if the type of 'man' we are talking about is other than a traditionally Masculine male.

k) Male Objectification and Vulnerability

Men are supposed to be in control. They are the ones who are supposed to be engaging the reader, not the more passively drawn female. And, their bodies should be clothed, not stripped and vulnerable as they are often pictured in ads. Males seem to be pictured in ways that defy what 'Men' are traditionally supposed to be pictured doing and being. Males are 'supposed' to be clothed because their bodies do not 'matter': male bodies are not supposed to be central to 'being a man'. However, this is not occurring. Males are being imaged in ways which go against imagined supposedly invisible masculinity.

For example, there is evidence that the naked male body is represented as being worthy of being an object. Male bodies are represented as being objectified. The male body is represented and imaged in certain ways as vulnerable, open to negotiation, open to change. This is interesting as the male body then becomes a primary cite of objectification, a bodily space usually reserved for females. This was witnessed within numerous images which depicted the naked (or nearly naked) male body pictured together and in opposition to a clothed (at least in part) female body and subject.

The first of this collection is an ad for Yves Saint Laurent (Elle, March 1999, pg. 238-239). A male and female are sitting back to back on a huge rock. The female is wearing a dress, and although the dress is transparent, she is still more clothed than the male. He is completely naked. The male is hunched over, his legs drawn to his head and chest, and his face is buried in his knees. The reader is reminded of the fetal position, of a vulnerable childlike position. The females body is drawn out, lounging, and she is looking at the camera. The power of her gaze is directed outward, towards the reader. The male is naked, vulnerable, the female is clothed, and less vulnerable.

The next ad (found in a fashion layout in Vogue, September 1998, pg. 622-623) pictures a male and female, both standing and facing each other. The female is fully clothed wearing a dress, while the male wears nothing but a pair of small swimming trunks. He is dripping wet. The viewer can see a full view of his backside, and the profile of his face. The female, in effect, is the one who is facing the reader. Again, she appears to be in charge, the aggressor, and is clothed. At the very least, she is depicted as being less vulnerable than the male, who is naked, wet, and not facing the reader.

These images seem to be showing the male body in an objectified, vulnerable light. This blurs traditional roles assigned to males and females. They are also characterized by ambiguity and confused or flipped gender subject positionings. They seem to confuse gender norms (e.g., showing females rather than males as dominant). This leads the reader to question what is going on within the image, much like actors and social subjects are required to question what is going on with gender and sex expectations and roles within today's gender and sex landscape. However, most of the ads from this collection were found within fashion layouts in women's magazines. This is important as these layouts were probably made with a female audience in mind. How the subjects are imaged in the layouts is for 'her eyes only'. This could explain the flipped gender positions, perhaps signifying that women want see themselves as being in control.

Another ad (from a fashion layout in Elle, January 1998, pg. 153) pictures a male and female body. Again, the male is completely naked. His body is facing down and is fully submerged in the water, exposing his completely naked backside. The reader cannot see his face. The female is wearing a bathing suit, is floating face up, and only part of her body is submerged. Her breasts, face and arms are out of the water. Again, the viewer

Elle, March 1999. This is a two page ad for Yves Saint Laurent clothing. The background is dark, but in color (blues and grays). A male and a female are sitting on a huge rock. The female is wearing a shimmery chain link looking long dress. It is transparent, and the reader can see her breast and body. She is looking at the camera. The male and female are sitting with their backs to each other, revealing profiles of their bodies. The male is sitting with his head drawn down to his knees. He is completely naked. His body is taut and tanned, and hairless except for the hair on his legs. His head hair is dark and curly. The reader cannot see his face. He is siting on a black blanket of some sort.

Vogue, September 1998. This is a section of a fashion layout. A male is pictured to the left of the ad. He is dripping wet, and wearing only swimming shorts. He is carrying scuba shoes. His body is hairless except for his lower leg hair. He is staring at the female of the ad. She is pictured to the right. She is wearing a long white skirt with a matching white top. Behind her is patio furniture, and what looks like a backyard of a house. She is staring back at the male, and her hands are placed on her hips. Both of the subjects are white, attractive and young.

Elle, January 1998. This is an image taken from a fashion layout. A male and a female are pictured swimming in a dark blue body of water. The female is wearing an orange bikini. She is floating face up in the water. Her breasts are emerged out of the water. The male is pictured as being under water. He is completely naked. His backside is facing the reader. His buttock is not as tanned as the rest of his body. The sunlight is reflecting off of his body.

looks to her face for a reading of what is going on in the image. Although both are exposing their bodies, the female and male body are not treated the same by the imaging or in turn how the image is read by the viewer. Indeed, the fact that the female must cover up certain highly sexualized parts of her body (breasts) in a bathing suit top leads the reader to look at the marked male body and the (strategically and hegemonically covered) female body differently. Although the ad itself is for a bathing suit, the fact remains that certain sexualized parts of the body can be included (naked male buttock), but some must be excluded (female breasts) from the viewers eyes. But this does not mean that the male is being objectified in the same way as females have been. In some ways he is privileged (and not objectified) in that he can show his backside free of clothing. She however has to cover up certain parts of her body. Some would argue that this may be so because female *bodies* are seen as entirely sexual. Bordo (1999) (who is speaking about the work of Irigaray) notes that on a female body, sex is all over, not relegated to any one particular place. However with men, sex emanates from the penis.

> Women's sexuality, ...- is not singular but multiple. It has no fixed location in the body...but is capable of being experienced and expressed all over the body. ...Men, it is implied by contrast have only *one*. By that, she seems to mean that men are their penises, sexually speaking (p. 36).

So, even though the male body is naked, it is not really objectified in a sexual way. His penis is not shown. Even though he is more naked than the female, he is still less objectified than she is in some ways. (Later, we will see how penises are never shown in ads, which is important in relation to the above point.) In effect, male bodies are not sexualized or objectified in the same ways as females in the ads, even when they are more naked than female bodies.

l) The Naked Male Body as Commodity Projection

The following quote (John Ashbury, New York Magazine) shows how males have been excused from being bodies, especially when those bodies are naked. "Nude women seem to be in their natural state; men, for some reason, merely look undressed...When is a nude not a nude? When it is male" (Bordo 1999:179). Given that males have been afforded the luxury of bodily invisibility in the past, the naked male body as object is seen only within certain venues, using certain lenses. One of these venues is high culture or art. Michelangelo's "David", as well as numerous other male nudes for the sake of high art appear within Western culture with a seeming separation from 'being' a male nude. What I mean by this is that the actual material male body is essentially divorced from *being* a body. It has been presented and represented as being other than body, more than body: it becomes art or culture itself. Although the 'seer' of the object or image knows that the object of contemplation is indeed a naked male body, this remains somehow separate from any actual highlighting *of* the object or image *as* a naked male figure or representation. What remains is a privileged position wherein the nude or the body itself becomes culture or art, or both. Images which present themselves to members of Western culture within popular ads today, however, do not seem to afford the naked male body the same privilege. The naked male body in art does not translate exactly to the naked male body being depicted in ads. This is because the bodies within the ads are carefully constructed to sell products. Today, the male body is being highlighted in such a way that leaves out high culture and or high art, making the representation of the male body just that: a body, a space, a canvas to display a product. The cultural codes which once accompanied the naked male body have changed, leaving the naked male object vulnerable and visible *as a body*. Within ads, the material body (as canvas) becomes a screen for a commodity or commodified projection of what a 'man' is.

This new naked male vulnerability can be compared to, or conceived of in relation to that of images and representations of the female nude. Although in the past female nudes have also been associated with some sort of high culture, or high art, the naked female body which we see today within popular media is very much a naked body, first and foremost. Again, the reductionist sentiment that women are their bodies while men have bodies may have shifted. Saying that 'both men and women *are* their bodies' becomes more apt. However, male and female are their bodies in different gendered ways.

When we see male and female bodies together, especially in the past, the female body is shown as sexual, sensual, and bare. However, we have examples where both male and female bodies are being located on some level in the same or similar subject positions. How we *imagine* naked male or female bodies may differ, but the male and female are for the most part being imaged in similar ways.

An example of this is an ad is for Calvin Klein underwear (Fashion, May 1999). The ad shows a male and a female in equal stages of undress. Both are shirtless (the female is wearing a bra), and both have their pants down around their knees. Both of their bodies are on display. They are both young, and both have taut and toned bodies. The males gaze is upward, while the female's gaze is downward. (Which is important in terms of the power of the gaze). But, apart from this their bodies are pictured almost identically. These types of ads are interesting as the reader can 'see' both the male and female bodies being pictured together, but do we see them as exactly the same? Not exactly. Their bodies are both somewhat naked, but, the reader is engaging with the two bodies differently. The same lens is not used. They are both being sexualized, or heterosexualized rather, but this is done in different ways.

How is it different? The indirect female gaze instructs the reader to view the female body differently. She is not as direct, her body does not seem to be as connected to her as a subject or person. This is in direct opposition to the thinking that females *are* their bodies. Something is working in both of the images which enables the female pictured to be separated from their bodies. The male bodies are on display. Here, the males seem to become their bodies. But their bodies are viewed with a different lens than the lens used for looking at the female bodies. We look at male and female bodies differently because we have been trained that they are different. This happens even when the subject positionings are almost identical. The fact that male bodies are being located

Fashion, May 1999. This is an ad for Calvin Klein cotton stretch underwear. The image is in black and white. The image features a female on the right of the ad, a male on the left. Both are almost naked, and are pulling down their pants. They are both facing the reader. She is looking down, he is looking up. Both are young, toned, and white.

and imaged *as bodies* is not straightforward. Traditional gender expecations and residue remains.

m) The Phallus and the Penis

Masculinity and metaphors which allude to the male body are produced by and from a phallic space and place. Both Masculinity and the male body become aligned with the traits and logic generally relegated to the realm of the phallocentric, to the penis. For our purposes phallic masculinity is embodied by the erect penis, and takes on properties of the erect penis. Flanigan-Saint-Aubin notes that

> Masculinity, in its psychologic and cultural manifestations and implications, is assumed to be the homologue of phallic genitality of the male with, at the very least, metaphoric connections to it - in part, aggressive, violent, penetrating, goal directed, linear" (in an edited book by Brod and Kaufman 1994: 241).

Men become 'real' men by espousing this erect penis like masculinity. But representations of males in ads deal only indirectly with the penis. It is important to note that no ads showed pictures of the naked penis. I came across pictures of bananas as penis, or measuring rulers as penis, but never 'real' penises in the flesh. All of the ads showed the penis covered up in clothes. These crotch shots turn on the assumption that the penis is really there and hidden under the clothes. Actually seeing the penis is not necessary to the manifestation of the phallus. Phallic masculinity operates under a veil; something (clothes, or a metaphor) must mask the very thing phallic masculinity turns on (a penis) in order to make sense.

The first of this collection (The Face, November 1998) is an ad for Sisley. The center of the frame is a mans crotch. Although he is clothed, his penis is presumably what the reader is to 'see' from the image. His hands are placed so that they frame (even more then the actual camera shot and angle) his penis. The reader gains clues as to the degree to which this male is a 'man' by way of the obnoxious belt buckle and four gaudy rings on his hands. He also wears a gold watch. This male and his penis are characteristic of what 'real men' presumably do and are. The penis then becomes the center of the male 'self'.

The Face, November 1999. This ad for Sisley shows the crotch of a male. He has 4 big gaudy rings on his fingers. His hands are placed around his crotch, so his hands frame his crotch area. He has a big gaudy belt buckle. The suit he wears is grey. His watch is gold.

He, in effect, becomes his penis, and everything associated with the penis within traditional phallic masculinity.

The next ad for Malone (The Face, August 1997) follows a similar formula. This ad pictures a black male wearing only jeans and no shirt lounging on his back on a black leather sofa. He is propping himself up using his elbows. What is interesting about this image is that the focus of the camera is on this man's crotch. His face and torso are blurry, due to the privileging of the lens focus on the phallic area. (Of course, one could say the camera is merely focusing on the product (jeans). However, his legs are wide open, and the jeans covering the leg closest to the reader are blurry as well.) The actual main focus of the image is then not the jeans directly, but the penis area. This privileging of the phallus over all other male traits is not just specific to the camera angle in this specific ad. Traditional masculinity demands the male is only a 'man' *because* of his penis.

The next ad follows suit with regard to the message, albeit in a different form. The ad is for underwear for men (Maxim, September 1998). A toned, muscular, tanned, male wearing only underwear is imaged in the bottom left corner. The main text of the ad reads 'How much room does a man really need to feel like a man? For over 100 years, BVD has made underwear *comfortable* and *durable* enough for men' (emphasis added). The language used in this ad, 'comfortable' and 'durable' suggest that men *do* things. They are not concerned with how a product looks (or in turn, their own looks), they are concerned with performance. The background of the ad pictures an arctic plane, covered in snow. Two figures, presumably men, are walking around on the snowy landscape. They have no need for looks. They care about comfort, durability: they are 'real men'. The main text of the ad (How much room does a man really need to feel like a man?) further highlights this message. It speaks to the importance of the penis in 'feeling like a man'. A real man then must make room for his penis, (preferably in his BVD underwear). Once

The Face, August 1997. This ad is for Malone Jeans. The subject of the image is a young black male, sitting on a leather couch. He is leaning back. He is wearing only jeans. The center of the ad is this man's crotch. The crotch of the jeans is the only part of the image that is in focus. He is smirking at the camera. The ad is in color.

Maxim, September 1998. This ad is for BVD underwear. The background is of a snowy landscape. Two men are walking through the snowy plane. In the bottom right hand corner of the ad a white tanned male is shown wearing only his underwear. He is somewhat facing the reader (his body is a bit off to the side) and is staring at the camera. This ad is in color.

this is accomplished, he does not have to worry much beyond this in order to fulfil his obligations as 'man'. The traditional phallic order then remains intact and important.

This textual message that men are concerned with doing things (comfort and durability) is contrasted with the half naked male in the corner. This male is showing his body. He is his body. This male goes against the text of the image as he does not represent comfort and durability. Instead, he is pleasing to the eye. He is not performing (except as maybe eye-candy). Perhaps because of this, his body is off to the side of the ad, which parallels how the male body is treated within traditional Masculinity. The body is off to the side, unimportant. It is (almost) peripheral to the message of the ad, even though the product is one which is directly associated with the male body.

Some of the representations of men within ads do seem to point to a more transformed, non-performative, non-penile version of the phallic. This alignment of masculinity and the properties of the hard phallic/penis *seems to be* changing within current image representations of the male body and corresponding subjectivities. Today, males are being 'pictured' or imaged in 'alternate' ways (other than from a traditional, erect, phallocentric space). This suggests a changing representation of male body sub(ob)jectivity which is separate from the given or standard ingredient of phallic masculinities. Numerous images such as these were found throughout the magazines, images which do not rely on standard or traditional Masculine markers. It appears that the male body is being used as a canvas in many ways to strategize and create these less (or non-) phallic masculinities. There are some seemingly 'new' versions of phallic masculinity which do not seem to retain many of the more traditional ingredients for what it means to be a man. This stands in contrast to phallic masculinity.

For example, contrast the dominant phallic flavor found within the previous ads with the following fashion layout (Detour, June and July 1999). The male pictured in this image also fronts his crotch as being the main object in the frame of the ad, much like the males discussed above. However, the phallic message found in this image does not follow

Detour, June and July 1999. This is part of a fashion layout. The ad is in color, and shows a young male who is submerged in water. His face is obscured by the bubbles he is blowing with his mouth under the water. He is white, hairless, and skinny. He is wearing a pair of small tight swimming trunks. His body is face up, sprawled out. His legs are wide open.

suit in regard to the above ads. This male is submerged in water. He is hairless, thin, not particularly toned, pale, and his face is obscured by the water he is submerged in. His legs are wide open, suggesting a certain vulnerability or penetrative message. This male body does not suggest to the reader the same traditionally phallic/penis connection as did the previous ads. Here, although the crotch (penis) is part of the image, the phallus as we know it is divorced from the penis. Being Male here does not work in the same ways. One does not think of penetrating, hard, prodding, direct, on top masculinity. Instead, the reader sees a penetrated, soft, submerged way to 'be a man'. Masculinity is not straightforward once traditional phallic overtones are aborted from the hard penis as *the* defining male body part.

The connection between the erect penis and traditional phallic masculinity is not easily divorced from each other. The connection 'dies hard' so to speak. Both males and females seem to be obsessed with connecting the penis with 'being a man'. Take for example an article (Cosmopolitan, September 1996) titled "Bigger is better? The Controversial Cosmetic Surgery for him" by Lida Brooks (pg. 251). The lead in for the article states, ‘Men have always worried about measuring up. Now, the more meagerly endowed can pay to get what nature failed to provide’. The article speaks to the fact that 'men' are indeed, on certain levels, measured by their penises. In this way, the size of one's penis shapes to what extent the male is a 'man'. The penis must fill the shoes of the traditional phallus. In turn, the traditional phallic order remains intact, in that the penis defines the male *as male*. The actual whole body, specifically the 'sex' of the body (determined by the presence of a penis), again is peripheral to an importantly inflated body part. Different phallic masculinities seem to exist and share the same masculine planes and frames. This suggests that the phallus cannot, is not, nor will ever be, one. It will always be lacking; either in multiple form or as nothing, as zero. Bordo notes that

> [t]he Phallus is haunted by the penis. And the penis is most definitely *not* "one". It has no unified social identity (but is fragmented by ideologies of race and

> ethnicity). Rather the exhibiting constancy of form, it is perhaps the most visibly mutable of bodily parts; it evokes the temporal not the eternal (in an edited book by Goldstein 1994: 266).

Because the penis can never be one, the phallus must also be characterized by multiplicity. We have evidence of this from the different hard and soft phallic masculinities represented in the ads.

n) Homosexual/Heterosexual Edge(iness)?

The traditional phallus and the penis play an important role in the realm of imaging heterosexual and homosexual male bodies. A recent segment from a magazine (FHM, July, 1999) tells of an operation 'racy' homosexual males get done to their penises where their urethras are expanded until eventually the urethra becomes big enough to house another penis (p. 114). Therefore, the penis becomes essentially non-phallic in that it is penetrable; indeed, penetrable by another penis. A penetrable male body which is one which is not Masculine. Sexual orientation needs to be addressed in discussions of the male body, especially since we are talking about other less traditional phallic representations of males.

The relationship between heterosexuality and homosexuality runs through any analysis on the male bodily subject. In the past, male attention to their bodies or aesthetics could be considered to be within a homosexual realm. If a male was interested in how he looked (in some circles) this would be an indication that he was gay. But this is not longer the case. "This 'cult of masculinity' isn't just in gay culture as so many like to believe. It envelops the entire culture. It is an obsessive devotion to an ideal" (Maclean's, 1999, pg. 38). At the very least, once homosexual images are now becoming somehow 'heterosexualized': directed back into the realm of the heterosexual male. Dutton (1995) states that

> it is worth noting that a reading of men's bodies first developed in the context of a specific (gay) sub-culture has been increasingly appropriated by the popular media and is now routinely aimed at an audience not explicitly defined in terms of any particular sexual preference (p. 259).

Because male bodies are being presented as heterosexual they enjoy a certain cultural privilege. The message seems to be that because heterosexual males (and therefore powerful males) are invested in their bodily aesthetics, we as a group (culture) should stand up and take notice. 'Important' (heterosexual) males are concerned, which makes it 'real'. The rhetoric holds that what (heterosexual) men spend time and resources on is important for society as a whole. Of interest is that the boundaries of heterosexuality are defined from an opposite homosexual other.

Take for example the following image for Jean Paul Gaultier perfume (again, his and hers perfume) (The Face, November 1998). The caption reads 'Le Male' and shows two males arm wrestling with each other. The males, however, are really the same person pictured facing each other. In essence, they are (he is) fighting themselves (himself). The reader sees what is happening through a boat porthole window taking on the role of a voyeur. The reader is not supposed to be there, witnessing the struggle between one male and his own sexuality. This is supposed to remain hidden. The 'two' men, are young and tanned. They have pretty features. They have hairless bulging arm muscles. One of them represents all that is traditionally male - he has a growling tiger tattoo, is holding a can of what could be spinach (Popeye), and he is clothed. His 'other' (who is not traditionally masculine) has a heart tattoo which reads 'love', he is naked, he has three earrings, and his perfume bottle is in the shape of a young, rather curvy and 'perfect' male body.

This ad speaks volumes to the boundaries of heterosexual and homosexuality. For one, the image suggests that males are in constant struggle with themselves *not* to represent anything which is *not* heterosexual. Here, these two males (although are really the same person in the same body) seem to be gay. They are gazing into each other's eyes. They are touching. All of these things are not included within a heterosexual space and place. Yet at the same time, one of these men could be characterized as being 'more of a man' than the other. Indeed, he is a 'man's man', a manly man. In some ways, the more feminized of the two (on the right) seems to be much more heterosexual that the one

The Face, November 1998. This is an ad for Jean Paul Gaultier cologne. The ad is framed by a boat window. The reader can see two subjects through the window. The two young, toned, tanned, brunette, hairless males are arm wrestling each other. The background is grey and blue. Both men have white sailors caps on. One has a stripy shirt on. The other is naked. The are staring into each other's eyes.

pictured to the left, the one which shows more of the traditionally male referents. Pictured alone without his 'othered' self, he would appear to be extremely effeminate, with the sailor hat, small stripy shirt, and pretty boy face. Real men don't look like this.

If nothing else, this ad shows us how the boundaries between homosexual and heterosexual, effeminate and masculine, self and other are not so easily characterized and pigeonholed as they seem or appear to be within our language and culture. They are much more difficult to determine. This allows for the transient sexual meaning(s) of the ad to be played with and molded according to the reader's perception of what is happening. However, somehow the relationship between them retains some solidarity in that there would not be one (e.g., homosexual, effeminacy, self) without the 'other' (e.g., heterosexual, masculine).

There seems to be a constant thrust towards an explicit "heteromasculinization" of the male subject which takes its form through homosexual othering. As Zita (1998) notes, "[t]o "heteromasculinize" is a verb that doesn't exist in a dictionary, hiding the process and activities of bodies that create a pseudosubstantive "heteromasculinity"" (p. 57). Zita goes on to say that

> [i]n all of this the queer male body occupies a precarious and endangered place in a political system of heterosexual male dominance. The male body is the terrain where violence and tenderness between men can cross over: ... Queers must disappear for bodies to remain visible, regular, heterosexual, and in place. Yet queer male bodies also reappear for heterocentric masculinity as the outer limit, on the other shore, on the backside of male flesh, the woman-side of man, where difference begins and ends, (1998: 59).

We will see that an overdetermination of how to 'be a man' is called upon in circumstances where there are hints of sliding or eroding heterosexual/homosexual boundaries.

Take for example the following ad for Kahlua (Maxim, July and August 1999). The ad images a male and a female, both almost nude, both smiling. They are alone, in a desert, standing in a huge puddle. There is a long (penis like) red hose wrapped around

Maxim, July and August 1999. This ad shows a male and a female standing in the desert. They are both young, toned, and white. A long red hose is draped around both of their bodies. Both have yellow swimming suits on. The female wears a bikini. The background is blue. Both subjects are smiling and laughing. The male is holding the hose, which is spurting out creamy frothy liquid. The liquid is rolling off of both of their bodies. They are standing in a puddle of water. The ad is for Kahlua.

both of them which the male is holding on to. The hose is spouting out liquid which is landing on and rolling off of both the male and female. The liquid is creamy and white. The bottom of the ad reads 'Anything goes'. At first, this image seems to be a poster for heterosexual activity (e.g., male and female imaged frolicking together). However, upon closer scrutiny, we can see that a certain, rather blatant element of contradictory sexual orientation runs through the message of this image (long red phallic hose spurting out white creamy liquid onto a seemingly heterosexual couple).

It is not so easy to separate out exactly where one side of the imagined hetero/homo polarity ends, and the other begins. The presence of the female suggests a heterosexual orientation for the male pictured in the image. However, the fact that he is the one holding the hose, and reveling in the creamy liquid which is covering and dripping off of his body suggests that there is a homosexual side to be explored. Of course, the reader could take this image to be proof of an existing phallic ordering and domination of both sexes. The phallus then rules both sexes, and orders the goings on between any relationship and/or subjectivity. But this requires that the reader make an assumption about the sexual orientation of the subjects in the image. How a reader comes to be able to know this, to produce this meaning, is not a simple process. It is informed by cultural and social clues, markers, and assumptions.

How does the reader know males in the images are heterosexual? Do they? It is more often than not the assumption that they are *not* homosexual, but what are the bodily clues for this assumption? Often, ads work by employing a certain gender or sex shock in order to draw the reader into the ad. This is taking place along the axiom of homosexuality and heterosexuality as well. Take for example the two different ads for Nautica Jeans (Teen People, October 1999; Maxim, September 1999). The first of these ads shows a groups of males standing together facing the camera army style. They all have shaved heads, are all wearing white T-shirts, and dark jeans. Some are touching each other. These males remain within a heterosexual realm. But when we take a look at the

Teen People, October 1999. This ad for Nautica Jeans company features a group of men all standing in a line and facing the camera. Some are smiling, some are not. There are three black men and 9 white males. All are young. All are wearing white t-shirts and dark jeans. They are standing in the forest.

Maxim, September 1999. This ad, also for Nautica jeans company, features the same men as in the first ad. Three black males, and 9 white males are pictured. The image is taken so the reader can see the profiles of the men. All of them are standing in a line, facing the same direction. They have removed their pants and shirts, and are now standing only in their underwear. Some are smiling, some are not. Some are smiling at each other. Some of the males are touching each other, so that some crotches are touching some buttock. They are pictured against a cement wall.

next ad, the assumption is not so easy to maintain. This ad leaves the reader feeling unsure about their previous assumptions about compulsory heterosexuality. These same males have been stripped of their pants, are only wearing their underwear and boots, and are all standing in a line facing front. Each male has another male standing directly behind him. Some are pressed against each other, buttock to crotch style. One of the males is turned around and is smiling at another male further down the line. Does the reader get the same comfortable heterosexual message as within the first two ads? No, the meaning has been tweaked with the dropping of the pants, and the bodily placement. Homosexuality now comes into play. But these are the exact same models who were in the previous two ads. They look exactly the same yet the messages are very different. Here we see how gender differences (either between men and women or between homosexual and heterosexual men) are very much *constructed* as erotic and as sexual. This is done by changing tiny signs in the message. These signs enable an entirely different meaning. Generic masculine sexualized images are being used here (army, tough men with shaved heads), but, leave us fascinated with a feeling of sexual uncertainty. The ads are sprinkled with proofs of heterosexuality, yet the overall message remains unfixed.

The world of male modeling, I'm told, is riddled with homosexuality. As such, there is a good possibility that a number of these men (models) imaged in the ad are either homosexual, have engaged in, or have been approached in regard to engaging in homosexual acts. Therefore, imaged male heterosexual subjects are being played by gay men in 'reality'. This further complicates the reading of the ads. This is congruent with what others have noticed when reading ads. "Many ads display the naked male body without shame or plot excuse, and often exploit rather than resolve the sexual ambiguity that is generated" (Bordo 1999: 185). The question remains, is this contradictory tweaking indicative of a new postmodern sexuality or body? Is this what we have to look forward to, a space where we are constantly guessing and perpetual confusion reigns? Is a postmodern sexuality even located on the body?

o) The Male Body as Technology and as Sites of Consumption

The following layout of ads depicts the body as a hybrid between male and machine. The first is an ad for a video game called 'Half life' (Maxim, March 1999, pg. 129). The male body pictured in the ad is seemingly half robot, half 'real' man. His body is angular, structured, sharp and hard. He carries a gun. His head is uncovered, and he wears glasses, ultimately showing the 'real' portion of the man.

The second ad is for an Altoids breath mint (Maxim, March 1999). The ad is a cartoon drawing of a man like creature, again, more robot that a real material male body. He looks metallic, his face is covered, and he appears to be primed for action. The text reads 'Iron mint! The curiously strong mints'. Again, a strong male robot like figure is linked to the strong breath mint.

What can we make of this strange linkage of the male body to machine? Bordo argues that much of the rhetoric which surrounds male bodies relies heavily on the metaphor of the male body as machine. The linkage of male/machine becomes involved being hard, mechanical and built for performance. These traits become built into what it means to be man. As Bordo (1999) notes, "Our aesthetic ideals, no less than our sexual responses, are never just "physical". In our culture, the hard body is a "take no shit" body" (p. 57). A hard body then means something to its reader, whether that hardness is achieved through a metal mold, or through the sculpting and definition of 'real' flesh and muscle. Of course, the metal version may be an extreme of the other, but helps to further cement the cultural and metaphorical linkage between the male body and machine. (As well, the male body as machine is only one way to be a man. One can be 'male' without being machinic.)

The cultural connectedness of the male body and machine suggests a certain hybridity. Another ad is Camel cigarettes (Maxim March 1999) further illustrates this notion of hybridity. The main character of the ad is a half man, half sea creature hybrid, who is carrying a woman in his arms. He has huge arms and legs, and his face is covered.

Maxim, March 1999. This is an ad for Half Life, a video game. The main subject of the ad is a male/robot hybrid. He has a man's face and is wearing glasses. His body looks like an action figurine. It is covered in protective plates and armor. He holds a large gun which is pointed downward. The cartoon hybrid is staring at the reader.

Maxim, March 1999. The background of this ad is mint green. The subject of the ad is a half man, half robot creature. The creature is holding a box of Altoid breath mints. 'He' is looking directly at the reader. The text is in red, and reads, 'Iron mint! The curiously strong mints'.

Maxim, March 1999. This ad is for Camel cigarettes. Policemen, photographers, and sunbathers are surrounding a half man, half sea creature. The creature is carrying a blonde woman in 'his' arms. She is smoking, and gazing at the creature. 'He' is walking through the water.

This ad is a reference to 1950's horror B movies - a time where smoking was prevalent and manly, and certain man-like animals posed considerable threat to mankind, at least in the movies (e.g., Godzilla, sea creatures emerging from the depths of the oceans). Although this example is not specifically linking the male body to machine, the theme of linking the male body to something else (thereby creating a hybrid body) is evident. Nettleton and Watson (1998) argue that bodily hybrids

> may make us more uncertain about what a body is, where it begins and where it ends. Indeed, there is a degree of irony here, as Shilling (1993) has pointed out; the more we know about bodies, the more we are able to control, intervene, and alter them, the more uncertain we become as to what the body actually is (p. 6).

If boundaries of the male body have been hidden and invisible this hybridity makes sense. Male as machine, or male as sea creature allow an unknown body a partly knowable boundary. This linkage offers clues about meanings of manliness. Take for example the connection of 'performance', male bodies, and machines. Both man and machine must be able to perform at all costs, making performance one of these hybrid clues.

The following ad for a JVC video camera (Maxim, July and August 1999) images a person (presumably a male) flying over an icy cliff on skis. (If this is a female body the entire reading of the image is altered incredibly.) His body is blurred from the speed which he is moving. The caption on the top of the ad reads 'Extreme performance'. This male body and the digital camera are being characterized as achieving this radical performative level. More of the text of the ad is as follows: 'You're about being the best. In everything you do. In everything you own'. Here we can see the linkage of yet another aspect of being male, the capacity to own, to purchase. The usage of the word 'you' again signifies the association between the act of purchasing a commodity, and the self as a

Maxim, July and August 1999. This ad is for JVC digital video equipment. The image is in color, and shows the side of an icy mountain. A figure in red is swooshing down the hill. His image is blurry, presumably because he is moving at such a top speed. The product is featured in the bottom right corner of the ad. The text reads, 'Extreme performance'.

male subject. Hence, male subjectivity becomes confounded with being machine like and with commodification. But where exactly does the male body fit into these linkages?

The final section of the text states: 'And it's all packed into a sleek, yet rugged compact unit that's extremely user friendly. So if you've ever imagined being limited only by your imagination, the JVC GR-DVL9500 is the camcorder for you'. The usage of the words 'sleek' and 'rugged' tie into what we have previously talked about in terms of the male body, but with an interesting twist. Sleek and rugged suggest a body, and not just any body. These words suggests a decidedly male body which is tight, toned, buff: everything which we have seen within many of the other ads which highlight the male body *as a body*. The male subject then has once again been connected with being a body. However, the last blurb of the text (So if you've ever imagined being limited only by your imagination, the JVC GR-DVL9500 is the camcorder for you) tells a different story, one which seems to be without the limits of the rugged sleek body suggested within the previous sentences. The appeal to living or experiencing life through one's imagination suggests not being tied or limited to *any* one body. (In fact, the nature of the product does not really require a body.) Perhaps this appeal comes to us in these times due to the fact that men *are* increasingly tied to, living through, and expected to *be* sleek and rugged bodies. In this way then, the JVC camcorder (once purchased of course) provides a way to be a male without having a body.

Another ad from Ford (Maxim, March 1999) highlights the aforementioned linkage between consumerism and male subjectivity. The ad pictures a young male, clothed, sitting in the lotus position, presumably meditating in front of a vast selection of 'toys'. One cannot help but bring to mind the bumper sticker which reads 'He who dies

Maxim, March 1999. This is an ad for Ford Ranger trucks. It shows a young white male who is fully clothed, sitting in the lotus position in front of his truck, and a number of other 'toys'. These toys include scuba gear, a surfboard, a Frisbee, a stereo speaker, a bike, a backpack, fishing rods, a dog, skis, and golf clubs. He is sitting in the dirt. The truck is raised up and all of the doors are open. The reader can see the sky through the open truck doors.

with the most toys, wins'. Again, it is 'he', not 'she' who wins from excessive consumerism, at least as far as the joke goes. The ad would not work in the same way if a woman was pictured instead of a man. The text of the ad reads:

> Spence put a new twist on an old philosophy. To be one *with* everything, he says, you've gotta have one *of* everything. That's why he also has the new Ford Ranger. So he can seek wisdom on a mountain top. Take off in the pursuit of enlightenment. And connect with Mother Earth. By looking no further than into the planet's coolest 4-door compact pickup. He says it gives him easy access to inner peace. Which makes him one happy soul.

This piece demonstrates how two things which do not fundamentally 'go' together, spirituality or enlightenment and consumerism, is being played (and preyed on) on in order to sell a product. However, more is being sold to the consumer than just the Ford. This ad also tells a specific story about how men 'are'. They need toys. They need objects so that they can *do* things. Males need to be active and this activity (at least in this ad) becomes somehow devoid of the male body as a means by which to physically carry out the activities the product promises. The male body has been successfully left out of the mix. This ad then represents an example of how the male body has been treated in the past, as an *invisible* entity. However, it is important to note that this ad exists on the same plane as all of the other images of (specifically) visible male bodies. It shares the same intertextual space.

An ad for Nokia cell phones (Fashion, May 1999) overtly links technology and its functions specifically to the human bodily form, specifically the *male* body form. The ad pictures (on the left hand side) a blurry image of a nude male torso in the dark. He is remarkably curved and round looking. On the right hand side a close up of a cell phone part is shown, also curved and round. The text of the ad reads, "body conscious sometimes function follows form NOKIA Connecting People". The linkage of the phone technology with the male body serves to reinforce the cultural connections made between male bodies and technology. The male body here is depicted as being like (or perhaps

Fashion, May 1999. One the left hand side of the two page ad, a nude male torso is imaged. His body is blurry and rounded. His arms are folded in front of his body. On the right hand side of the ad, the cell phone is imaged in the same manner. The cell phone is pictured close up, and the reader can see a glowing green light.

even being) technology on one level. The usage of the word "function" is interesting as, once again, the male body is textually linked to how well it performs, how it functions. However, within this ad at least, the male body is also being used and highlighted in a way which is devoid of said functionality. It is at rest, it is blurry, and the male body's boundaries are round and soft looking, much like women are expected to be. To the best of the readers knowledge, this body does not perform, at least in ways which are traditionally masculine (e.g., being tough, being active, working hard).

The image also brings to mind sexual performance, as he is shown naked and in the dark. This is backed up by the text when it says 'NOKIA Connecting People'. As well, the words 'body conscious' bring to mind a certain vulnerability within sexuality. Whether this male body is linked to sexual performance or not, the main point remains that the creators of the ad chose a naked male form to display or represent their technological product. The interest is that the male body as technology link does not exactly fit with previous male/technology connections. Here, it is the body *as a body* which makes the ad work. Again, this male is his body, and the male body is what is highlighted in the ad.

Another ad which connects the male body as machine or technology is one for the Sony Discman CD player (US, November 1998). The ad shows a male jumping up off of the floor (presumably dancing) to the music he is hearing on the discman. His face appears to be singing to the music. He is wearing a shirt, however the shirt is open wide, revealing a bare and hairless chest. The product is featured twice in the ad, once on top, and once in the male subjects hand. This ad highlights the interesting link of the male body to technology in a way that makes fun of male bodily performance. The text boasts that 'Rhythm is not included' and talks of how the discman will not skip, even if the subject 'swings' or 'bumps' the technology. The text goes on further to note, 'You know, US, November 1998. This is an ad for Sony Discman. The ad shows a young white male dancing to the music coming to his ears from the headphones attached to his Discman. He looks like he is screaming. His shirt is coming open, revealing his hairless toned chest. He is wearing black pants. His legs are doing the splits – presumably he is jumping in mid air.

like when you walk, dance, or stumble over your own two feet'. In this way, technology is all at once attached to, yet separate from the male body. And, this is done in a way which is congruent with a traditional masculinity - one which assumes that 'real men' can't dance. The theme of performance runs deep: performance of the discman, and performance of the male body. The connection has not been severed whatsoever, and, the linkage of the male body as machine remains intact. This is especially so in relation to a traditionally male expectation that men are not good at 'artsy-fartsy' things like dancing. They are better at tinkering, fixing, and performing in specific and preferred manly ways.

Part 5: Wrap up - Where does this leave us?

I will now turn to a series of thoughts in relation to what this all means. Where does this leave us, and where do we go from here in terms of questions and future research?

I began in an attempt to unpack the extent to which constructions of (imagined) masculinity could be compared to imaged and textual representations of male body within ad culture. I have outlined how the body is a site or canvas upon which masculinit(ies) are played out and upon. Jaggar and Bordo (1992) state that

> [t]he body is not only a *text* of culture. It is also, as anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu and philosopher Michel Foucault (among others) have argued, a *practical*, direct locus of social control. Banally, through table manners and toilet habits, through seemingly trivial routines, rules, and practices, culture is "*made* body," as Bourdieu puts it - converted into automatic, habitual activity (p. 13).

The male body is a site of social control, one which attempts to regulate a so called 'male' behavior through the male body. The male body then becomes a 'made body'. How this is done is not straightforward. Representations of male bodies are incomplete, fragmented, contradictory, and unstable. Consequently, because masculinity and male bodies are not fixed, bodies are also sites of contestation of control. We can undo (and redo) how our bodies are made meaningful. Males can undo (and redo) how their bodies are *made* Male.

But are these new negotiations of being a man merely variations of traditional Masculinity? Or, are they something truly different? If we say that males can 'be a man' in different ways and by different means than by adopting traditionally male behaviors, bodies, markers, etc, are we saying that they are still 'men'? As we saw within the beginning section on terminology, the very words we use to describe the male, man, masculine, are loaded with specific meaning. Are these really representations of 'men', or are they something else? Is what we have seen an alternate binary to masculinity, or is it altering masculinity itself?

Neither masculinity nor male bodies are the same or uniform the whole way through. There are many ways to be a man and any one of these does not guarantee 'maleness'. The notion of masculinit*ies* (rather than Masculinity) becomes more appropriate. But what do we do with representations of males which do not seem to fit into any type of masculine mold? For example, when both female and male gender markers are located on the same body, this shocks the reader into a world of unsteady and contradictory gender ordering. What is happening here? How can we say what is male, what is female, when there are no clear rules about *which* belongs to *what* category? Messing up the gender ordering allows us a glimpse at how the differences are imagined, rather than real. Bordo (1999) says that

> people's realities were *never* as simple as we imagined them to be from certain bodily signs. Nowadays, the codes are getting even less reliable than they once were, as young people "mix it up" - genetically, sexually, stylistically" (p. 41).

Even though gendered bodies may be messed up in this way, I am not entirely convinced that this mixing up of bodily codes makes gender difference any less important. There is much cultural investment in subjects being *either* male *or* female. The language allows and requires that we specify sex, gender and even degree of masculinity or femininity. It has been important. Is it still? Does this highlighting of the male body change any of the assumptions of male bodily and subject invisibility? Does making the male body more visible change the ways in which we order sex and gender? Maybe not yet. Maybe it is a matter of time, of repetition of these newly gendered male bodies. As it stands now, we (as a culture) seem so assured as to the answers about what is male/what is female. The supposed difference between male and female is repeated and reinforced on a day to day basis. We have different bathrooms for men and women. Different clothing companies cater to male or female bodies. Ask someone out of the blue and I bet they feel they could tell you what is male and what is female. But the fact remains that any gendered marker which suggests 'male' or 'masculine' can be tweaked to mean different things on different bodies. In effect, one cannot pin down meaning, or say with any certainty that 'blank' is male, 'blank' is masculine. Being a man means different things in different contexts. By providing and repeating a discourse which suggests that gender is not so fixed, perhaps this confidence in gender difference and fixity will begin to erode.

Right now, and within certain circles, fixed gender boundaries are policed by members of society. People become offended when I say that muscles, facial hair, whatever, does not mean they are male. Questioning boundaries goes against the supposed 'realness' of the sex distinctions. People who step over these boundaries are still stigmatized to a certain degree (e.g., the recent trend for males to wear nailpolish makes many people nervous). As Whitson (1990) argues, "Androgyny is a chimeric solution, and changes in gender relations are likely to require painful readjustments for many of us" (p. 29). If we take chimeric to mean a fantastic regrouping or collection of usually incongruent parts, we see that gender as we know it does not want to be a chimera. Gender wants to be distinct, fixed and congruent. There is much invested in this conception of gender, and this way of ordering our bodies and selves. Given this, for gendered and sexed bodies to be made into chimeras, fabrications, we can be sure that this is not going to be (nor is it now) a smooth transition from fixity to new fantastic combinations.

On the other hand, gender boundaries *are* being eroded on some levels. Feminine behavior is made male (e.g., as we saw with male beauty products). Certain traditionally female traits are being co-opted into the 'masculine'. Female markers or signs are being placed under erasure, coaxed into meaning something entirely different for males than they once did for females. As well, companies like The Gap are catering to one body: a body that could be either male or female. Some clothing companies do not differentiate between sexed bodies. In fact, fashion rhetoric in regard to what fashion will be like in the millennium promotes a definite gender neutrality in clothing. But this boundary melt is only happening in certain locations or with certain groups of people. And, it is not happening without constant struggle and negotiation over gendered meaning.

Perhaps in time the body will be less prone to gendered expectations. In effect, perhaps gender will not be so deeply concerned with, and written on the body. Some argue that this is the case. "Part of what seems to be going on nowadays is that some people are trying to reconstruct the categories as well as their bodies" (Bordo 1999: 41). In reconstructing the categories, would gender become less important in making bodies? Would this lend to a re-evaluation of current gender ordering? Gallop (1988) suggests that this may be the case.

> The new construction, the (post)modernist, multiple body, will not be any more "real" in an essentialist, noumenal way, but *might nevertheless produce a rearrangement in sexual hierarchies*, a salutary jolt out of the compulsive repetition of the same. And if we could create a new body, one no longer nearly paralyzed by the alternative phallic and castrated, but a different body, our best hope, our most efficacious politics would be a practice I have tried to outline here which we might call the poetics of the body (p. 99 emphasis added).

The gender ambiguity, confusion, and conflict seen within the ads may be the emergence of such a different postmodern body, the "tip of the ice" berg so to speak. In time, perhaps we will be in a better position to see how our bodies are being recategorized, reclaimed and renegotiated in the present time. Gender will probably continue mold, shape and order our bodies (and selves) in the future. However, this does not mean that gender and sex *as we now know it* will take *the* leading role in the ordering and making of our bodies. Gender will probably always serve to order and shape our bodies, but exactly how our bodies are impacted will change with time.

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